

Shakespeare's
Wit and Humor
William A. Lawson

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SHAKESPEARE'S WIT AND HUMOUR

BY
WILLIAM A. LAWSON



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PREFACE

In preparing this work, the aim has been to gather into a single volume, of convenient size and inviting print, such of Shakespeare's wit and humour as may with pleasure and satisfaction be read in the form of extracts, each connected in proper order with the story of the play from which it is taken. The matter selected is not dependent upon mere situation, plot or mistakes of identity, to afford enjoyment, but so far as has seemed desirable, the plot of each drama drawn upon has been briefly told, in order to throw light upon the chosen text and make the characters better understood and appreciated. Relatively large space has been devoted to Falstaff, as the crowning achievement of Shakespeare's comic genius.

Occasional omissions or breaks in the excerpts have been found desirable or unavoidable, for various reasons, and are denoted by dots; thus, . . . Grossness and indelicacies, which the manners and customs of the play-wright's

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day allowed, or even relished and expected, in stage productions, have been excluded, the intention being to make the book as well suited to the young as to any other class of readers. But no words have been changed or interpolated, nor have any other liberties been taken with the text. In most cases the matter omitted relates merely to the action, or otherwise is unsuited to the scope of the work.

The fun of Shakespeare is scattered with lavish hand broadcast through the comedies, but in the tragedies and most of the historical plays it is either scanty or entirely absent. Perhaps not more than one-twentieth part of the mass of his dramatic writings may be classed as either witty or humourous, the rest being sentimental, tragic or otherwise serious. Even of the comedies much is purely sentiment, recital or incident, rather than gaiety. So to many persons not familiar with his plays, and yet with a liking for good, amusing literature, this book of selections, with helpful analysis, narrative and comment, should prove convenient and profitable. The author hopes it often may serve, especially in the case of youthful readers, as a pleasant introduction to a comprehensive study

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and appreciation of the Shakespearian dramas in their entirety. And as the master poet and dramatist is unequalled in entertainment, a carefully chosen, copious and fully representative collection of his wit and humour scarcely can fail to afford delight to intelligent minds open to mirthful influences.

WILLIAM A. LAWSON.

SHAKESPEARE'S WIT AND HUMOUR

The pre-eminence of Shakespeare as a dramatist and poet is due no less to his astonishing versatility than to the greatness of his powers. No other dramatic author has shown so wide a range of genius. Ancient Greece had poets who never have been surpassed in tragedy, but none who, like the author of "Macbeth," "Othello," "Henry IV," "As You Like It," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and "The Tempest," exhibited supreme mastery alike in tragedy, comedy, and the realm of fancy. Shakespeare touched with equal ease the sublime and the ridiculous, his love of fun and infinite command of wit and humour being no less remarkable than his poetic fancy, profound insight into human nature, and matchless gifts of expression.

While it is only to his wit and humour that this book in the main relates, yet blended with

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what is witty or humourous is much of what is most beautiful in poetry, most charming in fancy, tenderest in sentiment, and wisest in philosophy of life. So to present from his many plays what appropriately may be gathered under the title of the present volume is to exhibit not only the most admirable and varied wit and delightful humour, but also a great fund of knowledge of human nature, charming felicity of diction, unapproachable powers of characterisation, and the most captivating flights of imagination.

Shakespeare was both a great wit and a great humourist. But how shall wit and humour be distinguished? It is not uncommon in literature to find them confused, and some noted writers have undertaken to define humour as certain forms of wit, which tends to make confusion worse confounded.

It is first to be remarked that wit is always purely a mental quality, and, unlike humour, can never arise from merely physical objects, or things seen. Thus a stage scene or situation may be intensely humourous, as where Falstaff feigns death on the battlefield, but can never be witty.

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The differences between wit and humour are numerous, but neither quality can well be bounded by a precise definition. Wit is often cruel, while true humour is never unkind. Wit may be likened to the flash of the lightning; humour to the genial warmth of the sun. The humourist is always sympathetic, and many great humorous writers, such as Charles Dickens, invoke tears as well as smiles and laughter, often combining the ludicrous with the pathetic. So Thackeray, in speaking of the "tender humour" of Dickens, calls humour "a mixture of love and wit." This may not be a very good definition, but it serves to direct attention to kindness as an essential element of humour.

A good distinction between wit and humour is made in Professor Henry Reed's "Lectures on English Literature," in which he says:

"Wit, I think, may be regarded as a purely intellectual process, while humour is a sense of the ridiculous controlled by feeling, and co-existent often with the gentlest and deepest pathos."

Another difference, to use an apt saying from Shakespeare, is that "brevity is the soul of wit," while the effect of humour is often height-

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ened by amplification. This is a fortunate thing for those professional humourists of the present day who are paid by the number of words or lines, or by the page or column.

De Quincey goes so far as to say that humour is of a diffusive quality, while wit is concentrated within a few words. But this, although generally true, is not always the case.

Sydney Smith, in one of his essays, describes wit as the discovery of an unexpected relation between ideas, implying superior intelligence and exciting no other emotion than surprise. He seems to have overlooked the element of pleasure, without which there can scarcely be wit. But the pleasure is not usually shared by the object or victim of a witticism, however keenly it may be enjoyed by others.

The famous divine considered puns to be merely the wit of words, consisting in the discovery of surprising verbal relations. But he pointed out that sometimes a pun is so superior as to redeem its species, instancing the case of a schoolboy who persisted in pronouncing "patriarchs" "partridges," thus giving some one opportunity to say the lad was making game of the patriarchs. On the whole, however,

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Sydney Smith regarded puns as a low order of wit, and "deservedly in bad repute."

According to the same entertaining author, the essence of humour is incongruity which creates a sense of surprise and no other emotion. If, for example, he says, sympathy be aroused, the sense of humour disappears.

But this is by no means an invariable rule. Consider, for instance, the singular blending of humour and pathos in the account of Falstaff's death by Pistol's wife (Dame Quickly) in "Henry V," wherein she says:

"Nay, sure, he's not in hell; he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. . . . Now I, to comfort him, bid him, 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet," etc.

It is to be observed that the incongruity which causes mirth may be merely physical, as when a pompous and carefully attired person excites laughter by slipping on an icy sidewalk and waving his arms wildly as he falls, uninjured. Of the same order of humour is buffoonery, such as the antics of a circus clown, and likewise mimicry, which is always directed

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to personal peculiarities or defects of some kind.

Prof. R. G. Moulton has called humour the "human interest in the ludicrous." It may lie in situation, in accident, or in acts, but wit is always verbal.

An element of sympathy always may be discerned in Shakespeare's humour, and it is this which serves to distinguish it from cold satire, such as characterises the writings of Dean Swift. This kindly feeling for human weaknesses and follies, this broad sympathy is manifest in nearly all the plays. It makes us forget or overlook, for the time being at least, the faults and vices of Falstaff, in our appreciation of the pleasure he affords us by his unfailing gaiety.

But Falstaff is more witty than humourous, although rich in both qualities. His humourous sense of the contrast between his own huge bulk and his diminutive page is shown when he addresses him ironically as "you giant," and says:

"I do here walk before thee, like a sow, that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one. If the prince put thee into my service for any

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better reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgment."

On the other hand, Falstaff's replies to the Chief Justice sparkle with wit. When, for example, the jurist said to him, "God send the prince a better companion," the ready retort was, "God send the companion a better prince."

It has been said that a humourist is always witty, but that a wit may not be at all humorous. Accordingly we find a number of Shakespeare's characters both witty and humorous, and some showing wit without humour. Yet others exhibit humour without wit.

Again there are characters, such as Dogberry, Bottom, and Malvolio, who are destitute of either quality, and still a source of vast and unfailing entertainment. The constable arouses the liveliest mirth by his pompous ignorance and self-importance, Bottom by his blundering dulness and simplicity, and Olivia's steward by his exceeding vanity and arrogant pretensions.

In the same witless category may be placed Justice Shallow and Slender, who are among the most amusing of all the playwright's creations.

It will be observed that to make illiterate

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persons misuse words and phrases is one of Shakespeare's favourite means of furnishing entertainment, as illustrated by Dogberry, Bottom, Mistress Quickly, Launcelot Gobbo, Pistol, and other characters. Perhaps Dame Quickly's ludicrous verbal blunders may have given Sheridan the hint for his scarcely less famous Mrs. Malaprop.

The villainous and subtle Iago has a keen, cynical wit, but, being wholly lacking in sympathy, he shows no trace of humour. His wit and intellectual power would be more often remarked and admired were not his character so malevolent and detestable. Note his opinion of women:

“— You are pictures out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended.”

A very different sort of wit is that of Rosalind, the heroine of “As You Like It,” one of the most charming and lovable of Shakespeare's women. It bubbles forth in its sparkling freshness and purity like the water of a mountain spring, spontaneous, constant, and delightful. It is so amiable as to partake some-

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what of the nature of humour. Her wit is chiefly raillery, exhibited in mock seriousness, but it never inflicts a wound. As displayed to Orlando, it masks a tender, romantic love. There is a characteristic touch of Rosalind's wit in her remark to her almost equally witty friend Celia:

“Do you not know I am a woman? when I think I must speak.”

Still another kind of wit is that of Mercutio, friend of Romeo. It is distinctively masculine, good-humoured, gay, light-hearted, and highly imaginative. Nothing could be richer in fancy or brighter with wit than his well-known lines, beginning:

“Oh, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you —”

in which he speaks of a soldier, frightened from his sleep, who “swears a prayer or two, and sleeps again.”

Mercutio is so rare a character that every reader of “Romeo and Juliet” must regret his “untimely taking off,” in the third act of the play.

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The wit of Portia, in "The Merchant of Venice," as displayed in her criticism of her suitors, is of a frolicsome and mocking nature. It is no less bright than Rosalind's, and is coupled with rare discernment and grace of diction. One of the most quoted lines from our great author is her summary of Monsieur Le Bon:

"God made him, and therefore let him pass
for a man."

Satire is the distinguishing quality of Biron, in "Love's Labour's Lost," exhibited in his ridicule of the tender passion and of other persons of the play. His is the oft-quoted saying:

"Small have continual plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others' books."

Even more satirical than Biron, and also exceedingly witty, are both Beatrice and Benedick in "Much Ado About Nothing."

The jester in "King Lear" is a "bitter fool," whose wit is of the sharpest, but yet of a pathetic quality, because of his manifest devotion to his fallen master. It is this character who likens "nothing" to "the breath of

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an unfed lawyer," and tells of the man who, "in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay."

A peculiar sort of morbid humour is that of "the melancholy Jacques," in "As You Like It." Among the most familiar and most frequently quoted passages in the plays are his lines beginning,

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players."

This picturesque and striking view of man's progress from the cradle to the grave is commonly assumed to be Shakespeare's own. But when analysed it is seen to be highly cynical, making life appear rather a vain and empty thing. The ideas are highly characteristic of Jacques, but not of the poet's genial and noble philosophy, as gathered from his works in general. Jacques is a misanthrope, who finds little good in mankind and nothing much in the world to please him. But his strange humour and superior intellect make him an interesting character and his sayings memorable.

In marked contrast with Jacques is Touchstone, the professional jester in the same play,

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whose humour is of a natural and good-natured sort. He is one of the cleverest of the dramatist's "fools," and there is much wisdom in his foolery. As the banished Duke says of him, "He uses his folly like a stalking horse, and, under the presentation of that, he shoots his wit."

The same remark applies to all Shakespeare's "fools" or "clowns."

Two other forms of humour appear in "The Taming of the Shrew." The capricious, mad humour of Petruchio, who breaks the unruly, termagant spirit of Katharine by the exercise of a domineering will, under show of kindness, is highly ironical. And his apparel is no less fantastic than his humour.

Drollery distinguishes the humour of Grumio, Petruchio's servant, a most comical fellow, full of an antic, mischievous spirit. One of his peculiarities is illustrated when he tantalises the hungry Katharine by offering her "the mustard without the beef," and so provokes her to beat him.

The ironical humour of Hamlet is of a high and philosophic order, tinged with sadness. It is always gentle, and cloaked under an appear-

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ance of seriousness: he never openly jests. There is occasionally a touch of satire in it, as in his replies to Polonius and his instructions to the players. The best of his humour appears in his discourse with Horatio and the grave-diggers, in which the noble prince moralises upon mortality, suggesting that Cæsar's clay "may stop some hole to keep the wind away," and that the dust of Alexander may do the same office for a bunghole.

There are numerous other personages in the plays — including Autolycus in "The Winter's Tale," and the two Dromios in "The Comedy of Errors,"— who are more or less witty or humourous, but it is needless to make particular mention of them here. Added to the more prominent above noted, they complete a long and wonderful procession of clearly defined characters, of which no two are alike. In nothing is Shakespeare's genius for characterisation more strikingly displayed than in his comic creations, such as Falstaff, and those rôles of a grave or tragic sort which yet occasionally relax into entertainment, as in the case of Hamlet, whose rare humour helps to endear him to all hearts.

Some of the poet's earlier comedies, such

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as "Love's Labour's Lost" and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," teem with puns and jesting quibbles. It must be admitted that many of these plays upon words are an inferior sort of wit. But in this Shakespeare merely followed the fashion of his time, which ran to all sorts of verbal conceits and trivialities, then much heard and admired in all ranks of society, from the court of Queen Elizabeth down to the lowest orders. Pope overlooked this custom in his strictures upon the dramatist's use of puns and other verbal subtleties as low and trifling.

In the later plays, puns and quibbles are relatively rare, and the wit is almost entirely that of the relations between ideas, not merely verbal resemblances.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

“The Two Gentlemen of Verona” is believed to have been based upon a Spanish play of an earlier period, having a similar story.

Proteus and Valentine dwell in Verona and are close friends. Valentine goes to Milan, where he pays court to Silvia, daughter of the Duke of Milan. Thither, after a time, Proteus is sent by his father, against his own inclination, for he is very much enamoured of Julia, a lady of Verona. But Proteus no sooner sees Silvia than he conceives a passion for her, and treacherously aims to win her from his friend Valentine, abandoning his former love for Julia.

The duke is bent on marrying his daughter to one Thurio, and Valentine plans an elopement, of which Proteus warns her father. The elopement is prevented, and Valentine is banished by the indignant duke. Proteus then pretends to aid Thurio, but secretly presses his own suit to Silvia, who scornfully repels him

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and reproaches him for his treachery. She ventures forth, in the company of a friend, to seek Valentine, who has fallen into the hands of outlaws, banished gentlemen like himself, and has agreed to become their leader.

Meanwhile the forlorn Julia has repaired to Milan in the disguise of a youth, and enters the service of Proteus, whose perfidy she thus discovers. But she still conceals her identity, under the name of Sebastian, and remains faithful to him. Together they depart from Milan to seek Silvia, and they find her in the forest inhabited by the outlaws. Being again repulsed by Silvia, Proteus threatens her with violence, and is overheard by Valentine, who rescues her and denounces him. Proteus makes quick repentance and is as quickly forgiven by Valentine. Julia then reveals herself, and the old love of Proteus is revived. The duke comes in search of his daughter, pardons Valentine, and bestows her hand upon him. And so the play ends happily.

“The Two Gentlemen of Verona” is doubtless one of the earliest, if not the first, of Shakespeare’s plays. It has much humour, but most of it is of a quality inferior to that of his later

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comedies. The fashion of the age ran greatly to verbal quibbles, and wit was considered to lie in ingenious juggling with words. The dramatist merely followed custom in this regard, but in doing so incurred the reproach of some modern critics.

Usage in the Elizabethan period required the introduction of a court fool or clown, in compositions for the stage, and in the present piece this conventional requirement is met by the substitution of servants, Launce and Speed, as fun-makers.

The play opens in Verona, with an exchange of friendly sentiment between Proteus and Valentine. Proteus seeks to dissuade his friend from going to Milan, and Valentine replies:

Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus;
Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.

.

Pro. If ever danger do environ thee,
Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers,
For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine.

Val. And on a love-book pray for my success.

Pro. Upon some book I love I'll pray for thee.

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Val. That's on some shallow story of deep
love,

How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont.

Pro. That's a deep story of a deeper love;
For he was more than over shoes in love.

Val. 'Tis true; for you are over boots in
love,

And yet you never swam the Hellespont.

Pro. Over the boots! nay, give me not the
boots.

Val. No, I will not, for it boots thee not.

Pro. What?

Val. To be in love, where scorn is bought
with groans;

Coy looks with heart-sore sighs; one fading
moment's mirth

With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights:

If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain;

If lost, why then a grievous labour won;

However, but a folly bought with wit,

Or else a wit by folly vanquishèd.

Pro. 'Tis love you cavil at; I am not Love.

Val. Love is your master, for he masters
you:

And he that is so yoked by a fool,

Methinks should not be chronicled for wise.

Pro. Yet writers say, As in the sweetest
bud

The eating canker dwells, so eating love

Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

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Val. And writers say, As the most forward
bud

Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turn'd to folly; blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes.
But wherefore waste I time to counsel thee
That art a votary to fond desire?
Once more adieu.

Valentine departs and Speed, his servant,
enters.

Proteus. Gav'st thou my letter to Julia?

Speed. Ay, sir.

Pro. But what said she? did she nod?

Speed. [*Nodding.*] Ay.

Pro. Nod — Ay — why, that's noddy.

Speed. You mistook, sir; I say she did nod:
and you ask me if she did nod; and I say, Ay.

Pro. And that set together is — noddy.

Speed. Now you have taken the pains to set
it together, take it for your pains.

Pro. No, no; you shall have it for bearing
the letter.

Speed. Well, I perceive I must be fain to
bear with you.

Pro. Why, sir, how do you bear with me?

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Speed. Marry, sir, the letter very orderly: having nothing but the word noddy for my pains.

Pro. Beshrew me, but you have a quick wit.

Speed. And yet it cannot overtake your slow purse.

Pro. Come, come; open the matter in brief: what said she?

Speed. Open your purse, that the money and the matter may be both at once delivered.

Pro. Well, sir, here is for your pains: what said she?

Speed. Truly, sir, I think you'll hardly win her.

Pro. Why, couldst thou perceive so much from her?

Speed. Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her; no, not so much as a ducat for delivering your letter: and being so hard to me that brought your mind, I fear she'll prove as hard to you in telling her mind. Give her no token but stones; for she's as hard as steel.

Pro. What! said she nothing?

Speed. No, not so much as — *Take this for thy pains.*

The scene changes and a dialogue occurs between Julia and Lucetta, her waiting-woman.

Jul. Of all the fair resort of gentlemen
That every day with parle encounter me,

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In thy opinion which is worthiest love?

What think'st thou of the gentle Proteus?

Luc. Lord, lord! to see what folly reigns
in us!

Jul. How now! what means this passion at
his name?

Luc. Pardon, dear madam; 'tis a passing
shame

That I, unworthy body as I am,
Should censure thus on lovely gentlemen.

Jul. Why not on Proteus, as of all the rest?

Luc. Then thus: of many good I think him
best.

Jul. Your reason?

Luc. I have no other but a woman's reason;
I think him so, because I think him so.

Jul. And wouldst thou have me cast my love
on him?

Luc. Ay, if you thought your love not cast
away.

Jul. Why, he of all the rest hath never
moved me.

Luc. Yet he of all the rest, I think, best
loves ye.

Jul. His little speaking shows his love but
small.

Luc. Fire that is closest kept burns most of
all.

Jul. They do not love that do not show
their love.

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Luc. O, they love least that let men know
their love.

Jul. I would I knew his mind.

Luc. Peruse this paper, madam.

[*Gives a letter.*]

Julia takes the love-letter, which Lucetta says she thinks is from Proteus, and, pretending to be angry, gives it back to Lucetta, to be returned, and dismisses her summarily.

Jul. And yet, I would I had o'erlook'd the
letter.

It were a shame to call her back again,
And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.
What fool is she, that knows I am a maid,
And would not force the letter to my view?
Since maids, in modesty, say *No* to that
Which they would have the profferer construe
Ay.

Fie, fie! how wayward is this foolish love,
That, like a testy babe, will scratch the nurse,
And presently, all humbled, kiss the rod!
How churlishly I chid Lucetta hence,
When willingly I would have had her here!
How angrily I taught my brow to frown,
When inward joy enforced my heart to smile!
My penance is to call Lucetta back,
And ask remission for my folly past:—
What, ho! Lucetta?

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Re-enter LUCETTA.

Luc. What would your ladyship?

Jul. Is it near dinner time?

Luc. I would it were;
That you might kill your stomach on your meat,
And not upon your maid.

Julia, still professing unconcern, contrives to recover the letter, and, having read it, tears it and throws it down. Lucetta retires, remarking, aside:

. . . she would be best pleased
To be so angered with another letter.

Julia then confesses to herself her love for Proteus, kissing each piece of paper for amends.

The succeeding act finds Valentine and Speed in Milan.

Val. Go to, sir; tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?

Speed. She that your worship loves?

Val. Why, how know you that I am in love?

Speed. Marry, by these special marks: first you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms like a mal-content; to relish a love-song, like a robin redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; to sigh, like a school-boy that had lost his A B C; to weep, like

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a young wench that had buried her grandam; to fast, like one that takes diet; to watch, like one that fears robbing; to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money; and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.

Val. But tell me, dost thou know my lady Silvia?

Speed. She that you gaze on so, as she sits at supper?

Val. Hast thou observed that? even she I mean.

Speed. Why, sir, I know her not.

Val. Dost thou know her by my gazing on her, and yet knowest her not?

Speed. Is she not hard favoured, sir?

Val. Not so fair, boy, as well favoured.

Speed. Sir, I know that well enough.

Val. What dost thou know?

Speed. That she is not so fair as (of you) well favoured.

Val. I mean that her beauty is exquisite, but her favour infinite.

Speed. That's because the one is painted and the other out of all count.

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Val. How painted? and how out of count.

Speed. Marry, sir, so painted, to make her fair, that no man counts of her beauty.

Val. How esteemest thou me? I account of her beauty.

Speed. You never saw her since she was deformed.

Val. How long hath she been deformed?

Speed. Ever since you loved her.

Val. I have loved her ever since I saw her; and still I see her beautiful.

Speed. If you love her, you cannot see her.

Val. Why?

Speed. Because love is blind.

Val. Belike, boy, then you are in love: for last morning you could not see to wipe my shoes.

Speed. True, sir; I was in love with my bed; I thank you, you swung me for my love, which makes me the bolder to chide you for yours.

A later scene introduces Launce, servant to Proteus, upon a street in Verona, leading his dog.

Laun. Nay, 'twill be this hour ere I have done weeping; all the kind of the Launces have this very fault: I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and am going with Sir

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Proteus to the Imperial's court. I think Crab my dog to be the sourest-natured dog that lives: my mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity; yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear: he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog: a Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I'll show you the manner of it: this shoe is my father;—no, this left shoe is my father;—no, no, this left shoe is my mother; nay, that cannot be so neither; yes, it is so, it is so; it hath the worsor sole. This shoe with the hole in it is my mother, and this my father. A vengeance on't! there 'tis. Now, sir, this staff is my sister; for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand; this hat is Nan our maid; I am the dog:—no, the dog is himself, and I am the dog,—O, the dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so, so. Now come I to my father; *Father, your blessing*;—now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping; now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on:—now come I to my mother (O, that she could speak now!) like a wood woman;—well, I kiss her:—why there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down; now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes: now the dog all this while sheds not

WIT AND HUMOUR

a tear, nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

Enter PANTHINO (a servant).

Pan. Launce, away, away aboard; thy master is shipped, and thou art to post after with oars. What's the matter! why weep'st thou, man? Away, ass; you will lose the tide if you tarry any longer.

Laun. It is no matter if the tied were lost; for it is the unkindest tied that ever man tied.

Pan. What's the unkindest tide?

Laun. Why, he that's tied here: Crab my dog.

Pan. Tut, man; I mean thou'lt lose the flood: and, in losing the flood, lose thy voyage; and, in losing thy voyage, lose thy master; and in losing thy master, lose thy service; and, in losing thy service,—Why dost thou stop my mouth?

Laun. For fear thou shouldst lose thy tongue.

The Duke of Milan, in a scene with Valentine, seeks to discover the latter's intentions regarding Silvia.

Duke. There is a lady, sir, in Milan, here, Whom I affect; but she is nice, and coy, And nought esteems my aged eloquence:

SHAKESPEARE'S

Now, therefore, would I have thee to my
tutor,—

For long ago I have forgot to court:
Besides, the fashion of the time is chang'd; —
How and which way I may bestow myself
To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.

Val. Win her with gifts, if she respect not
words;

Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,
More than quick words do move a woman's
mind.

Duke. But she did scorn a present I sent
her.

Val. A woman sometimes scorns what best
contents her:

Send her another; never give her o'er;
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.
If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,
But rather to beget more love in you:
If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone;
For why, the fools are mad if left alone.
Take no repulse whatever she doth say:
For, *get you gone*, she doth not mean *away*:
Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces;
Though ne'er so black, say they have angels'
faces.

That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

“Love’s Labour’s Lost” is one of the most frolicsome and vivacious, and perhaps the lightest, of Shakespeare’s comedies. Like “The Two Gentlemen of Verona,” it exhibits his earliest and most immature style. It is characterised by much rhyming, constant plays upon words, and studied repartee, its incessant quibbling being in accordance with the dramatic fashion of the time. In these earlier compositions of the author, the wit consists rather in the disclosure of resemblances between words than between ideas, the latter being a much higher order of wit, which reached its culmination in Falstaff. ✓

The scene of this play is a park in Navarre, where King Ferdinand pledges himself and his attendant lords — Biron, Longaville, and Dumain — to an ascetic life for a period of three years, during which they are not to see any woman, are to spend their time in study, to eat but one meal daily, to fast one day in each

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week, and to sleep not more than three hours in the twenty-four. But the unexpected coming of a princess of France on a diplomatic mission, attended by her ladies — Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine — of necessity suspends this programme for the time being, and results in the complete forsaking of their vows by the king and his courtiers, through the influence of the tender passion.

When the king unfolds his academic scheme, Longaville at once accepts it, saying:

I am resolv'd; 'tis but a three years' fast:
The mind shall banquet though the body pine:
Fat paunches have lean pates; and dainty bits
Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.

But Biron at first protests, in this wise:

Study is like the heaven's glorious sun,
That will not be deep-search'd with saucy
looks;
Small have continual plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others' books,
These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,
That give a name to every fixed star,
Have no more profit of their shining nights
Than those that walk and wot not what they
are.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Too much to know is to know naught but fame;
And every godfather can give a name.

King. How well he's read, to reason against
reading!

A curious character in this play is Don Armado, a pompous and fantastical Spaniard, whose page is Moth, a bright-witted lad. Here is an example of their talk:

Arm. I will hereupon confess I am in love: and, as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base wench. If drawing my sword against the humour of affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought of it, I would take desire prisoner, and ransom him to any French courtier for a new devised courtesy. I think scorn to sigh; methinks, I should out-swear Cupid. Comfort me, boy; what great men have been in love?

Moth. Hercules, master.

Arm. Most sweet Hercules! — More authority, dear boy, name more; and, sweet my child, let them be men of good repute and carriage.

Moth. Samson, master; he was a man of good carriage, great carriage,— for he carried the town-gates on his back like a porter: and he was in love.

Arm. O well-knit Samson! strong-jointed Samson! I do excel thee in my rapier as much

SHAKESPEARE'S

as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in love too: — who was Samson's love, my dear Moth?

Moth. A woman, master.

The satirical Biron falls in love with Rosaline, a lady in the train of the princess, and thus he soliloquises:

O! — and I, forsooth, in love! I, that have
been love's whip;

A very beadle to a humourous sigh;
A critic; nay, a night-watch constable;
A domineering pedant o'er the boy,
Than whom no mortal so magnificent!
This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy;
This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid:
Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms,
The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,
Liege of all loiterers and malcontents. . . .
What! I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
A woman, that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing; ever out of frame;
And never going aright, being a watch,
But being watch'd that it may still go right!

Among the odd characters in the play are Holofernes, a pedantic schoolmaster; Sir Nathaniel, a foolish curate fond of big words, and Costard, a clown. The following illustrates their respective qualities:

WIT AND HUMOUR

Nath. (to Holofernes.) I praise God for you, sir; your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affection, audacious without impudency, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy. I did converse this *quondam* day with a companion of the king's, who is intituled, nominated, or called, Don Adriano de Armado.

Hol. *Novi hominem tanquam te:* his humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.

Nath. A most singular and choice epithet.
[Takes out his table-book.]

Hol. He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.

Moth. They have been at a great feast of languages and stolen the scraps.

[To COSTARD, *aside.*]

Cost. O, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words! I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word; for thou art not so long by the head as *honorificabilitudinitatibus*: thou art easier swallowed than a flap-dragon.

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Biron gives this satirical description of a courtier accompanying the princess:

This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons peas,
And utters it again when God doth please:
He is wit's pedlar, and retails his wares
At wakes, and wassels, meetings, markets, fairs;
And we that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,
Have not the grace to grace it with such show.
This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve,—
Had he been Adam, he had tempted Eve:
He can carve too, and lisp: why this is he
That kiss'd away his hand in courtesy:
This is the ape of form, monsieur the nice,
That, when he plays at tables, chides the dice
In honourable terms; nay, he can sing
A mean most meanly; and in ushering,
Mend him who can: the ladies call him sweet;
The stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet:
This is the flower that smiles on every one,
To show his teeth as white as whale's bone:
And consciences that will not die in debt
Pay him the due of honey-tongu'd Boyet.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

There is no little fun in "The Comedy of Errors," but in the main it arises from humorous situations dependent upon mistakes of identity. The play has thus more of the elements of farce than of true comedy, and, if presented by a capable dramatic company, is much better enjoyed and appreciated in the theatre than when read. It is apparently based upon a Roman comedy, the "Menaechmi" of Plautus, but is considered much superior to the Latin original.

The plot lies in a series of laughable errors arising from the impossibility of distinguishing between the twin brothers Antipholus, and also between their twin servants, the two Dromios. The comic dialogue suffers by comparison with later comedies by the same author. Here is a specimen, in which Antipholus of Syracuse matches his wit with that of his servant Dromio :

Ant. S. Well, sir, learn to jest in good time :
There's a time for all things.

SHAKESPEARE'S

Dro. S. I durst have denied that before you were so choleric.

Ant. S. By what rule, sir?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of Father Time himself.

Ant. S. Let's hear it.

Dro. S. There's no time for a man to recover his hair, that grows bald by nature.

Ant. S. May he not do it by fine and recovery?

Dro. S. Yes, to pay a fine for a peruke, and recover the lost hair of another man.

Ant. S. Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement?

Dro. S. Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts: and what he hath scanted men in hair he hath given them in wit.

Ant. S. Why, but there's many a man with more hair than wit.

Dro. S. Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

The other Antipholus gives this notable description of Pinch, who figures in the play:

They brought one Pinch; a hungry lean-faced
villain,

A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
A thread-bare juggler, and a fortune-teller;
A needy, hollow-ey'd, sharp-looking wretch;
A living dead man.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The "shrew" is Katharine, one of the two daughters of Baptista, a rich gentleman of Padua. Petruchio is a gentleman of Verona, who comes to Padua for the avowed purpose of marrying for money. He is warned of Katharine's violent temper and shrewish disposition, but nevertheless becomes a suitor for her hand and a share of her father's wealth. He is a man of bold and enterprising spirit, possessed of a wild, fantastic humour, who assumes an imperious attitude toward Katharine, the better to subdue her self-will, unruly nature, and insolent demeanour. His method is to mask his domineering tactics with an air of kindness and solicitude, but, if his methods are rough and overbearing, he is not bad-hearted, and is only violent when it suits his purpose to be so.

Grumio, servant to Petruchio, has a peculiarly antic disposition and is invincibly droll under all circumstances. Bianca, a sister of Katharine, is of a sweet nature. She has three suitors — Lucentio, Gremio, and Hortensio.

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Petruchio appears with Grumio, in the opening scene of the play, before the house of his friend Hortensio, in Padua.

Pet. . . . Here, sirrah Grumio; knock, I say.

Gru. Knock, sir! whom should I knock? is there any man has rebused your worship?

Pet. Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.

Gru. Knock you here, sir? why, sir, what am I, sir, that I should knock you here, sir?

Pet. Villain, I say, knock me at this gate, And rap me well, or I'll knock your knave's pate.

Gru. My master is grown quarrelsome: I should knock you first, And then I know after who comes by the worst.

Pet. Will it not be?
Faith, sirrah, an you'll not knock I'll wring it:
I'll try how you can *sol, fa*, and sing it.

[*He wrings GRUMIO by the ears.*]

Gru. Help, masters, help! my master is mad.

Pet. Now, knock when I bid you; sirrah villain!

Enter HORTENSIO.

Hor. How now! what's the matter? — My old friend Grumio! and my good friend Petruchio! . . .

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Pet. Signior Hortensio, come you to part the fray? . . .

Hor. . . . Rise, Grumio, rise; we will compound this quarrel.

Gru. . . . If this be not a lawful cause for me to leave his service,— look you, sir,— he bid me knock him, and rap him soundly, sir: well, was it fit for a servant to use his master so. . . .

Whom would to God I had well knock'd at first,
Then had not Grumio come by the worst.

Pet. A senseless villain! — Good Hortensio,

I bade the rascal knock upon your gate,
And could not get him for my heart to do it.

Gru. Knock at the gate! — O, heavens!
Spake you not these words plain,— *Sirrah*
knock me here,
Rap me here, knock me well, and knock me
soundly?

And come you now with — knocking at the
gate?

Pet. Sirrah, be gone, or talk not, I advise
you.

Hor. Petruchio, patience; I am Grumio's
pledge.

In a subsequent scene, Hortensio introduces Petruchio to Gremio, and says Petruchio

SHAKESPEARE'S

Will undertake to woo curst Katharine;
Yea, and to marry her, if her dowry please.

Pet. I know she is an irksome, brawling
scold.

Grem. . . . But will you woo this wild-cat?

Pet. Will I live?

Gru. Will he woo her? ay, or I'll hang her.

Pet. Why came I hither but to that intent?
Think you a little din can daunt mine ears?
Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the sea, puff'd up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets
clang?

And do you tell me of a woman's tongue;
That gives not half so great a blow to hear,
As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?
Tush! tush! fear boys with bugs.

Gru. For he fears none.

Hortensio disguises himself in order that, in the capacity of a music teacher, he may pay court to Bianca, and is introduced to her home by Petruchio. Petruchio is assured by Baptista that if he marries Katharine he shall have

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twenty thousand crowns, down, and on the father's death half of all his lands.

Hortensio, who has undertaken to give Katharine a lesson on the lute, "re-enters with his head broken."

Bap. How now, my friend! why dost thou look so pale?

Hor. For fear, I promise you, if I look pale.

Bap. What, will my daughter prove a good musician?

Hor. I think she'll sooner prove a soldier: Iron may hold with her, but never lutes.

Bap. Why, then thou canst not break her to the lute?

Hor. Why, no; for she hath broke the lute to me.

I did but tell her she mistook her frets,
And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering,
When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,
Frets, call you these? quoth she; *I'll fume with them:*

And, with that word, she struck me on the head,
And through the instrument my pate made way;
And there I stood amazed for awhile,
As on a pillory, looking through the lute,
While she did call me rascal fiddler
And twangling Jack, with twenty such vile terms,
As she had studied to misuse me so.

SHAKESPEARE'S

Pet. Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench;
I love her ten times more than e'er I did:
O, how I long to have some chat with her!

Bap. Well, go with me, and be not so dis-
comfited:

Proceed in practice with my younger daughter:
She's apt to learn, and thankful for good
turns.—

Signior Petruchio, will you go with us,
Or shall I send my daughter Kate to you?

Pet. I pray you do: I will attend her here.

[*Exeunt* BAP., GRE., TRA., and HOR.

And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail; why, then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale:
Say that she frown; I'll say that she looks as
clear

As morning roses newly washed with dew:
Say she be mute, and will not speak a word;
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence:
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
As though she bid me stay by her a week:
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns, and when be mar-
ried—

But here she comes; and now, Petruchio, speak.

Enter KATHARINE.

Good-morrow, Kate; for that's your name, I
hear.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Kath. Well have you heard, but something
hard of hearing:

They call me Katharine that do talk of me.

Pet. You lie, in faith; for you are call'd
plain Kate,

And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst;

But, Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,

Kate of Kate-Hall, my super-dainty Kate,

For dainties are all cates; and therefore, Kate,

Take this of me, Kate of my consolation; —

Hearing thy mildness prais'd in every town,

Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,—

Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,—

Myself am mov'd to woo thee for my wife.

Kath. Mov'd! in good time: let him that
mov'd you hither

Remove you hence.

Petruchio, undaunted by Katharine's sharp tongue, proceeds with his strange wooing, and she strikes him, to try if he be a gentleman, she says. He swears he will cuff her, if she strikes again, but remains unruffled, returning bold compliments for her insults, and declaring he will marry her, willing or unwilling. Her father enters, and Petruchio, disregarding her termagant rage, announces that they have agreed so well together that "upon Sunday is the wedding day." Katharine declares:

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I'll see thee hanged on Sunday first.

Baptista, however, takes Petruchio's word for it, despite her protestations, says "it is a match," and Petruchio and Katharine severally leave the room.

On the day appointed for the wedding everything is in readiness, the guests are assembled, but Petruchio has not returned from his announced journey to Venice, and Katharine is furiously angry and ashamed. She vents her rage, and goes out weeping, but Biondello, a servant, then enters and announces:

Why, Petruchio is coming, in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice turn'd; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another laced; an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town armoury, with a broken hilt, and chapeless; with two broken points: his horse hipped with an old mothy saddle, and stirrups of no kindred; besides, possessed with the glanders, and like to mose in the chine; troubled with the lampass, infected with the fashions, full of wind-galls, sped with spavins, rayed with the yellows, past cure of the fives, stark spoiled with the staggers, begnawn with the bots, swayed in the back and shoulder-shotten; ne'er legged before, and with

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a half-checked bit, and a head-stall of sheep's leather, which, being restrained to keep him from stumbling, hath been often burst, and now repaired with knots; one girth six times pieced, and a woman's crupper of velure, which hath two letters for her name, fairly set down in studs, and here and there pieced with pack-thread.

Grumio accompanies his master, in like strange costume, "caparisoned like the horse."

Despite all protests, Petruchio insists upon being married "in his mad attire," and swears so loudly in church during the ceremony that the amazed priest lets fall the book. And as the holy man stoops to pick it up the bridegroom gives him such a cuff that down go both book and priest. At which the bride "trembled and shook."

After the ceremony Petruchio calls for wine, drinks, and throws the dregs in the sexton's face; then kisses the bride

. . . with such a clamorous smack
That, at the parting, all the church did echo.

Petruchio comes with his bride to her father's house, where the wedding feast is ready.

SHAKESPEARE'S

Pet. Gentlemen and friends, I thank you
for your pains:

I know you think to dine with me to-day,
And have prepar'd great store of wedding
cheer;

But so it is, my haste doth call me hence,
And therefore here I mean to take my leave.

Bap. Is't possible you will away to-night?

Pet. I must away to-day, before night come:
Make it no wonder; if you knew my business,
You would entreat me rather go than stay.

And, honest company, I thank you all,
That have beheld me give away myself
To this most patient, sweet, and virtuous wife:
Dine with my father, drink a health to me;
For I must hence; and farewell to you all.

Tranio. Let us entreat you stay till after
dinner.

Pet. It may not be.

Gre. Let me entreat you.

Pet. It cannot be.

Kath. Let me entreat you.

Pet. I am content.

Kath. Are you content to stay?

Pet. I am content you shall entreat me stay;
But yet not stay, entreat me how you can.

Kath. Now, if you love me, stay.

Pet. Grumio, my horse.

Gru. Ay, sir, they be ready: the oats have
eaten the horses.

Kath. Nay, then,

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Do what thou canst, I will not go to-day;
No, nor to-morrow, nor till I please myself.
The door is open, sir; there lies your way;
You may be jogging whiles your boots are
green;

For me, I'll not be gone till I please myself:
'Tis like you'll prove a jolly surly groom,
That take it on you at the first so roundly.

Pet. O Kate, content thee; pr'ythee, be not
angry.

Kath. I will be angry; what hast thou to
do? —

Father, be quiet: he shall stay my leisure.

Gre. Ay, marry, sir, now it begins to work.

Kath. Gentlemen, forward to the bridal
dinner:

I see a woman may be made a fool
If she had not a spirit to resist.

Pet. They shall go forward, Kate, at thy
command.—

Obey the bride, you that attend on her;
Go to the feast, revel and domineer,
Carouse full measure to her maidenhead;
Be mad and merry,— or go hang yourselves:
But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.
Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare; nor
fret.

I will be master of what is mine own:
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
My household stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything;

SHAKESPEARE'S

And here she stands, touch her whoever dare;
I'll bring mine action on the proudest he
That stops my way in Padua.— Grumio,
Draw forth thy weapon, we are beset with
thieves;

Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man.—
Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch
thee, Kate;

I'll buckler thee against a million.

[*Exeunt* PET., KATH., and GRU.]

Bap. Nay, let them go, a couple of quiet
ones.

Gre. Went they not quickly, I should die
with laughing.

Tra. Of all mad matches, never was the
like!

Luc. Mistress, what's your opinion of your
sister?

Bian. That, being mad herself, she's madly
mated.

Gre. I warrant him, Petruchio is Kated.

Of the wedding journey to Petruchio's house,
Grumio talks to himself on his arrival in the
hall:

Fie, fie on all tired jades, on all mad mas-
ters, and all foul ways! Was ever man so
beaten? was ever man so rayed? was ever man
so weary? I am sent before to make a fire,
and they are coming after to warm them. Now,

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were not I a little pot, and soon hot, my very lips might freeze to my teeth, my tongue to the roof of my mouth, my heart in my belly, ere I should come by a fire to thaw me: — but I, with blowing the fire, shall warm myself; for, considering the weather, a taller man than I will take cold.— Holla, ho! Curtis!

Enter CURTIS.

Curt. Who is that calls so coldly?

Gru. A piece of ice: if thou doubt it, thou mayst slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a run but my head and my neck. A fire, good Curtis.

Curt. Is my master and his wife coming, Grumio?

Gru. O, ay, Curtis, ay: and therefore fire, fire; cast on no water.

Curt. Is she so hot a shrew as she's reported?

Gru. She was, good Curtis, before this frost; but, thou knowest, winter tames man, woman, and beast; for it hath tamed my old master, and my new mistress, and myself, fellow Curtis.

The servant Curtis is eager for news of the journey, and Grumio at length gratifies him:

Gru. Tell thou the tale: — but hadst thou not crossed me, thou shouldst have heard how

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her horse fell, and she under her horse; thou shouldst have heard, in how miry a place; how she was bemoiled; how he left her with the horse upon her; how he beat me because her horse stumbled; how she waded through the dirt to pluck him off me; how he swore; how she prayed — that never pray'd before; how I cried; how the horses ran away; how her bridle was burst; how I lost my crupper; with many things of worthy memory; which now shall die in oblivion, and thou return unexperienced to thy grave.

Curt. By this reckoning, he is more shrew than she.

When Petruchio and Katharine arrive, he makes a show of welcoming her to his home, but abuses and beats the men-servants. The pair sit down to dinner, but he declares the cook has burnt the meat, and throws it and the dishes about the stage. So bride and groom go fasting to bed, one of the servants remarking: "He kills her in her own humour," which is the key to Petruchio's system of taming.

Petruchio presently returns to the dining-hall, and in a monologue thus further discloses his method:

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She eat no meat to-day, nor none shall eat;
Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall
not;

As with the meat, some undeserved fault
I'll find about the making of the bed;
And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,
This way the coverlet, another way the sheets:—
Ay, and amid this hurly, I intend
That all is done in reverend care of her;
And, in conclusion, she shall watch all night:
And, if she chance to nod, I'll rail and brawl,
And with the clamour keep her still awake.
This is a way to kill a wife with kindness:
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong
humour.

He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Now let him speak; 'tis charity to show.

A subsequent scene brings out Katharine's discontent and Grumio's humourous disposition.

Kath. The more my wrong, the more his
spite appears:
What, did he marry me to famish me?
Beggars, that come unto my father's door,
Upon entreaty have a present alms;
If not, elsewhere they meet with charity:
But I,— who never knew how to entreat,
Nor never needed that I should entreat,—
Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep;

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With oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed:
And that which spites me more than all these
wants,

He does it under name of perfect love;
As who would say, if I should sleep or eat,
'Twere deadly sickness or else present death.—
I pr'ythee go, and get me some repast;
I care not what, so it be wholesome food.

Gru. What say you to a neat's foot?

Kath. 'Tis passing good; I pr'ythee let me
have it.

Gru. I fear it is too choleric a meat:
How say you to a fat tripe, finely broil'd?

Kath. I like it well: good Grumio, fetch it
me.

Gru. I cannot tell; I fear 'tis choleric.

What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?

Kath. A dish that I do love to feed upon.

Gru. Ay, but the mustard is too hot a little.

Kath. Why, then the beef, and let the
mustard rest.

Gru. Nay, then I will not; you shall have
the mustard,

Or else you get no beef of Grumio.

Kath. Then both, or one, or anything thou
wilt.

Gru. Why, then the mustard without the
beef.

Kath. Go, get thee gone, thou false delud-
ing slave. [Beats him.]

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Petruchio comes in with a dish of meat, but compels Katharine to thank him before he allows her to eat. A tailor then enters with a new gown that has been made for the bride.

Pet. Thy gown? why, ay; — Come, tailor,
let us see't.

O mercy, God! what masquing stuff is here?
What's this? a sleeve? 'tis like a demi-cannon:
What, up and down, carv'd like an apple-tart?
Here's snip, and nip, and cut, and slish, and
slash,

Like to a censer in a barber's shop: —
Why, what, o' devil's name, tailor, call'st thou
this?

Hor. I see she's like to have neither cap
nor gown. [*Aside.*

Tai. You bid me make it orderly and well,
According to the fashion and the time.

Pet. Marry, and did; but if you be remem-
ber'd,

I did not bid you mar it to the time.
Go, hop me over every kennel home,
For you shall hop without my custom, sir:
I'll none of it: hence! make your best of it.

Kath. I never saw a better-fashion'd gown,
More quaint, more pleasing, nor more com-
mendable:

Belike you mean to make a puppet of me.

Pet. Why, true; he means to make a pup-
pet of thee.

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Tai. She says your worship means to make
a puppet of her.

Pet. O monstrous arrogance! Thou liest,
thou thread,

Thou thimble,

Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter,
nail,

Thou flea, thou nit, thou-winter-cricket thou! —
Brav'd in mine own house with a skein of
thread?

Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant;
Or I shall so be-mete thee with thy yard,
As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou
liv'st!

I tell thee, I, that thou hast marr'd her gown.

The tailor protests that the gown was made
as ordered, but Petruchio refuses to take it, and
sends him away.

Pet. Well, come, my Kate; we will unto
your father's

Even in these honest mean habiliments:

Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor;
For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest
clouds,

So honour peereth in the meanest habit.

What, is the jay more precious than the lark,
Because his feathers are more beautiful?

Or is the adder better than the eel,

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Because his painted skin contents the eye?
O no, good Kate; neither art thou the worse
For this poor furniture and mean array.
If thou account'st it shame, lay it on me.

Through such treatment Katharine becomes fully subdued and gentle-mannered. And at a banquet in her father's house Petruchio wins a wager that he has the most obedient wife in all the company. The test is that each husband shall send to the parlor for his wife, and Katharine is the only one who comes immediately and without cavil. Petruchio charges her to tell "these headstrong women" what duty they owe their "lords and husbands," and she responds thus eloquently:

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending rebel,
And graceless traitor to her loving lord? —
I am asham'd that women are so simple
To offer war where they should kneel for peace,
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,
When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

“ A Midsummer Night's Dream ” is a play of sentiment and fancy, of illusion and enchantment. In this production the poet's imagination reached its highest development. It links romance with fairyland, so that “ beings lighter than the gossamer and smaller than the cowslip's bell ” are magnified to human proportions and set upon the stage, to add charm and amusement to its succession of diverting scenes and incidents.

Apart from the entertainment arising from situation and enchantment, the humour of the play is found chiefly in an interlude, which is the undertaking by a number of illiterate mechanics to enact the piece known as “ Pyramus and Thisbe,” for the diversion of Theseus, Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta, his affianced bride. Ovid's sad tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, which Shakespeare burlesques, had been translated into several English versions, and appears to have been very popular in the sixteenth cen-

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ture. The youth and maid were lovers, whose homes were side by side. Their parents opposed their union, but they found means of converse through a chink in the dividing wall between the two dwelling places. They were secretly to meet one night in Ninus' tomb, to which Thisbe repaired in the darkness, but while she waited she was alarmed by a lioness and fled into the wood, letting her mantle fall in her haste. This the beast tore with his bloody jaws. When Pyramus came and found the mantle in this condition, and prints of the lion's feet, he believed Thisbe had been slain, and took his own life with his sword. Thisbe, returning, found him dead, and, in despair, yielded up her life upon the point of the same weapon.

The following scene is laid in a room of a cottage in Athens.

Enter SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT,
QUINCE, *and* STARVELING.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens,

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to play in our interlude before the duke and duchess on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is — The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.— Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll.— Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer, as I call you.— Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallantly for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it. If I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms; I will condole in some measure. To the rest: — yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks,
With shivering shocks,
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates:

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And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! — Now, name the rest of the players.— This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; — a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too; I'll speak in a monstrous little voice; — *Thisne, Thisne.*— *Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear; thy Thisby dear! and lady dear!*

Quin. No, no, you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.— Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus's father; myself, Thisby's father; — Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part: — and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

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Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, *Let him roar again, let him roar again.*

Quin. An you should do it too terribly you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any suckling dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus, for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see on a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-coloured beard, your orange-tawny beard, your

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purple-in-grain beard, or your . . . perfect yellow.

Quin. . . . Masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse: for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse more obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect; adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

They meet again the following night by the light of the moon, at the appointed place, where, unnoted by them, Titania, queen of the fairies, is lying asleep. Her husband, Oberon, the fairy king, vexed at her refusal to yield to him a certain adopted child, has cast a spell upon her by squeezing the juice of a magical flower upon her slumbering eyes. The effect of the charm is that she must madly dote upon whatever living thing she sees when she awakes.

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here is a marvellous

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convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorne brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action, as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of *Pyramus and Thisby* that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe you must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed: and for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in, God shield us! a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing: for there

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is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—“Ladies,” or “Fair Ladies! I would wish you, or I would request you, or, I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life. No, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:”—and there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber: for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snug. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanack; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then you may leave a casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open; and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a

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bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure or to present the person of moonshine. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snug. You never can bring in a wall.—
What say you, Bottom?

Bot. Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

At this juncture comes Puck, a mischievous sprite and "merry wanderer of the night," who, unseen by them, hearkens to their rehearsal, and waits for an opportunity to play some trick upon them. When Bottom goes out, Puck follows him, and transforms his head into that of a long-eared ass. Meanwhile the ridiculous, bungling rehearsal proceeds.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus.— Thisby, stand forth.

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Pyr. *Thisby, the flowers of odious savours
sweet,*

Quin. *Odours, odours.*

Pyr. ——— *odours savours sweet:*

*So doth thy breath, my dearest Thisby
dear.—*

*But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear.* [Exit.

Puck. *A stranger Pyramus than e'er played
here!* [Aside.— Exit.

This. *Must I speak now?*

Quin. *Ay, marry, must you: for you must
understand he goes but to see a noise that he
heard, and is to come again.*

This. *Most radiant Pyramus, most lily
white of hue,*

*Of colour like the red rose on triumphant
brier,*

*Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never
tire,*

I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. *Ninus' tomb, man; why, you must not
speak that yet: that you answer to Pyramus.
You speak all your part at once, cues and all.—
Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is, never tire.*

At this point Bottom returns, and, at sight of his changed and monstrous form, the others, alarmed, take to their heels. Puck follows, to

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torment them with fresh pranks. Bottom sings, to keep up his courage, and so awakens Titania, who, under the influence of the magical spell, instantly falls in love with him, lavishes endearments upon him, and summons fairies — Peasblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed — to be his attendants. She bids them wait upon him and lead him to her bower, where Oberon, in the background and unseen, amuses himself by listening to the following discourse:

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,

· While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where's Peasblossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peasblossom.—
Where's Monsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Monsieur Cobweb; good monsieur, get your weapons in your hand and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur; and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loath to have

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you over-flown with a honey-bag, signior.—
Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

Must. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neif, Monsieur Mustardseed.

Pray you, leave your courtesy, good monsieur.

Must. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalero Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's monsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face: and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music; let us have the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desire'st to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender; I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new
nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me; I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

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They sleep, and Oberon, advancing, breaks Titania's spell by touching her eyes with an herb. When she awakens, she loathes the sight of Bottom, whom Puck likewise relieves of enchantment, so that later he wakes alone, restored to his proper form, and says:

When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer:— my next is, *Most fair Pyramus*.— Heigh-ho!— Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream— past the wit of man to say what dream it was.— Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was— there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had,— But man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen; man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [Exit.

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At length the time arrives for the representation of "Pyramus and Thisbe" before Duke Theseus, Hippolyta, Demetrius, Lysander, and other guests of the occasion. The prologue, as spoken by one of the clownish players, is an amusing example of misplaced stops or pauses, thus:

If we offend, it is with our good will.

*That you should think we come not to offend
But with good will. To show our simple skill,*

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider, then, we come but in despite.

*We do not come as minding to content you.
Our true intent is. All for your delight*

*We are not here. That you should here re-
pent you.*

*The actors are at hand: and, by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know.*

The other blunderers proceed with the play, after the manner following, to the diversion of the assemblage:

Enter LION and MOONSHINE.

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts
do fear

The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps
on floor,

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May now, perchance, both quake and tremble
here,

When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug, the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam:
For if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity of my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good
conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord,
that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

The. True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour can-
not carry his discretion; and the fox carries the
goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot
carry his valour; for the goose carries not the
fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and
let us listen to the moon.

.

Moon. This lantern doth the horned moon
present;

Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the
rest: the man should be put into the lantern.
How is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the can-
dle: for, you see, it is already in snuff.

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Hip. I am weary of this moon: would he would change!

In this fashion the travesty of "Pyramus and Thisbe" goes on to its close, after which "A Midsummer Night's Dream" concludes with a visit of Puck, Oberon, Titania, and the fairy train to the palace, where they dance and sing, voicing their blessings on the household and the union of Hippolyta with the duke.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Perhaps no play of Shakespeare's is more read, or more popular as presented upon the stage, than "The Merchant of Venice." Its plot combines two highly interesting stories — the tale of Shylock and his bond, and that of Portia and the caskets — both of which are of Latin origin. It is probable, however, that Shakespeare found the rough material for his masterpiece in an earlier English play referred to in Gosson's "School of Abuse" (1579), representing "the greedinesse of worldly chusers and bloody mindes of usurers." But the marvellous power of characterisation, felicity of expression, poetry, wit, and skilful development of the double plot bear the unmistakable impress of the poet's matchless genius, and are all his own.

The story of the usurer Shylock's crafty bond, with its forfeit of "a pound of flesh, cut nearest the merchant's heart," and also that of the

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three caskets, from which Portia's wooers were required to choose, need but a brief outline here.

Bassanio, being in need of money, and wishing to pay court in suitable fashion to the rich heiress Portia, at Belmont, induces his friend Antonio, a fellow-merchant, to borrow for his use 3,000 ducats from Shylock. The Jew bitterly hates the Christian Antonio, who publicly has reviled and spat upon him for lending money on interest, and finds in this new transaction an opportunity for revenge. Shylock, however, cunningly dissembles, and, professing a desire to be friendly, lends the 3,000 ducats without interest, stipulating only, in pretended jest, that Antonio shall sign a bond to forfeit a pound of flesh in case of failure to repay the loan in three months. Antonio, through disasters to his ships, incurs the forfeit, and the Jew, provided with scales and a keen knife, demands from a high court of justice in Venice a judgment enabling him immediately to exact the forfeiture.

Meanwhile Bassanio has at Belmont made fortunate choice of the leaden casket, which, by the terms of her father's will, entitles him to

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claim Portia as his bride, and her heart goes with her hand.

When Antonio's bond becomes forfeit, and Portia is apprised of his desperate situation, she not only advances twice the sum of the loan, but, disguised as a young doctor of law, and with credentials furnished by her cousin, Dr. Bellario of Padua, she goes to Venice and takes his place, to sit in judgment upon Shylock's cause. After failing in her efforts to induce the Jew to accept payment and forego the forfeiture, she bids him cut his pound of flesh, but warns him that if he shed a drop of Christian blood his life becomes forfeit, under the Venetian law.

The baffled usurer then demands his money, but Portia rules that, as he has conspired against a Christian, the law demands confiscation of all his wealth; one-half to the State, the other to Antonio, and that Shylock's very life is at the mercy of the duke.

Shylock's life is spared, on condition that he become a Christian. And, on the intercession of the noble Antonio, he is allowed to retain one-half his wealth, provided he shall will it to his daughter Jessica, who has eloped with and married a Christian.

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Portia exhibits rare ability and grace of diction during the trial, which is one of the most thrilling and absorbing scenes ever represented on the stage.

An entertaining character in the play is Gratiano, a friend of Bassanio and Antonio, whose lively wit serves as a foil to Antonio's sadness. The three thus converse:

Ant. I hold the world but as the world,
Gratiano —

A stage, where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

Gra. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the
jaundice

By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio,—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks,—
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle.*

And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!

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O, my Antonio, I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing; . . .
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool's gudgeon, this opinion.—

Gra. . . . silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not ven-
dible. [Exit GRA.]

Ant. Is that anything now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of
nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His
reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two
bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you
find them; and, when you have them, they are
not worth the search.

In Portia's home at Belmont she discusses
with her maid Nerissa the merits of her suitors.

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and
holy men, at their death, have good inspira-
tions; therefore, the lottery that he hath de-
vised in these three chests, of gold, silver, and
lead,—whereof who chooses his meaning
chooses you,—will, no doubt, never be chosen
by any rightly but one who you shall rightly
love. But what warmth is there in your affec-
tion towards any of these princely suitors that
are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as
thou namest them, I will describe them; and

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according to my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts that he can shoe him himself. . . .

Ner. Then is there the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, *An if you will not have me, choose:* he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine: he is every man and no man; if a throstle sing he falls straight a-capering; he will fence with his own shadow; if I should marry him I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me I would forgive him; for if he love me to madness I shall never requite him.

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Ner. What say you then to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Por. You know I say nothing to him; for he understands not me, nor I him; he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture; but, alas! who can converse with a dumb show? How oddly he is suited! I think, he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under for another.

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Por. Very vilely in the morning when he is sober; and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk; when he is best he is a little worse than a man; and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast. An the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and

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choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket: for, if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords; they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

A curious, clownish character in the play is Launcelot Gobbo, servant to Shylock. He thus soliloquises in a street scene.

Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew, my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me,

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Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot, or good Gobbo, or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away. My conscience says,—No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo: or as aforesaid, honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run, scorn running with thy heels. Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: Via! says the fiend; away! says the fiend, for the heavens; rouse up a brave mind, says the fiend, and run. Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me,—My honest friend, Launcelot, being an honest man's son, or rather an honest woman's son;—for indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste;—well, my conscience says, Launcelot, budge not. Budge, says the fiend. Budge not, says my conscience. Conscience, say I, you counsel well; fiend, say I, you counsel well: to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew, my master, who (God bless the mark!) is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation: and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run.

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Here follows a scrap of dialogue between Launcelot and Jessica, Shylock's daughter :

Jes. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork eaters we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

The vivacious wit of Portia is well exemplified in these satirical remarks, addressed to Nerissa :

I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accouter'd like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak, between the change of man and boy,
With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride; and speak of frays,
Like a fine bragging youth: and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
I could not do withal: then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd
them:
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF

Sir John Falstaff is the most entertaining of all Shakespeare's characters, the one on which he most lavished the boundless resources of his wit. No rôle received so much attention from the dramatist. The fat knight figures prominently in the first and second parts of "King Henry IV," has the chief rôle in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and his death is described in "Henry V." Thus he appears, or is given space, in no less than four plays, a distinction not enjoyed by any other of Shakespeare's personages, unless the followers of Falstaff be counted. The playwright evidently was conscious of the superior merit of this remarkable characterisation, for he makes Falstaff say:

The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent, or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men.

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It may be said with confidence that no other character, in all literature, is comparable with Falstaff in nimbleness, copiousness, and brilliancy of wit. His jests at times are gross, but usually of a highly intellectual quality. They flow constantly and with the utmost ease from his tireless invention; gay and sparkling, untainted by malice, and leaving no sting. And Sir John's wit is joined to strong common sense and a keenness of insight that are distinguishing characteristics of this inimitable rôle.

It was because of Falstaff that Dr. Samuel Johnson remarked that none of Shakespeare's plays was more read than the first and second parts of "King Henry IV," and that "perhaps no author has ever in two plays afforded so much delight."

Falstaff seems to have been an entirely original creation of the poet's genius, not an historic character. Shakespeare first gave him the name of "Sir John Oldcastle," which caused some offense to Protestants, because there was a real Oldcastle, better known as Lord Cobham, a very serious personage, who died a martyr to their faith. Hence the change to Falstaff, which left obscure Prince Henry's reference to

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the jovial knight as "my old lad of the castle," a play upon the original name.

Falstaff should never be confounded with Sir John Fastolfe, a real personage, who in the play of "King Henry VI" is denounced for cowardly conduct on the field of battle, stripped of the garter, and banished from the realm.

Falstaff's reference to his age as "some fifty, or, by our lady, inclining to threescore," is to be taken humourously. It must have been at least seventy years, for it appears from the second part of "King Henry IV" that he was page to the Duke of Norfolk when Justice Shallow was "of Clement's Inn," and that he and Shallow spent "a merry night" in Saint George's fields together before Shallow entered the inns of court, which was "fifty-five years ago." This conclusion of advanced age accords well with Prince Henry's reference to him as "that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, . . . that vanity in years."

Falstaff's chief characteristic is his constant gaiety. There is ever a jest upon his lips, even under circumstances the most adverse to merriment. His good humour and unfailing wit win him indulgence for his vices. Although he re-

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veals himself as a conscienceless liar, rogue, glutton, drunkard, and robber, whose sole aim in life seems to be the gratification of his appetites and baser passions, he stealthily creeps into our indulgence. We must despise his character, and yet we grieve for his loss when, "his heart fractured," he disappears from the pages made enchanting by his rare personality. A man more full of faults is seldom pictured, but had Falstaff been designed to win charity for sinners the aim scarcely could have been more successfully accomplished. When the ponderous knight finally vanishes from the scene we feel, like Prince Henry when Falstaff was feigning death on the battlefield, that we could have "better spared a better man."

The "cowardice" of Falstaff is made in the plays in which he figures occasion for much fun at his expense. But it seems to be of a calculating sort, due to a disregard of "honour," rather than to physical fear. It is to be remembered that he is a knight in a military age, when knighthood is the reward of conspicuous valour, and is in receipt of a pension from the crown when first he comes upon the stage. On several occasions he exhibits remarkable coolness

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and courage. When the Sheriff of London comes to arrest him for highway robbery, a hanging offence in those days, Falstaff continues to make merry, and presently goes to sleep behind the arras, where he conceals himself by direction of the prince. On this occasion it required remarkable intrepidity in the knight to jest in this fashion with the prince:

If you will deny the sheriff, so; if not, let him enter: if I become not a cart as well as another man, a plague on my bringing-up! I hope I shall as soon be strangled with a halter as another.

Such was the airy response to the prince's bantering declaration that Falstaff was "a natural coward, without instinct."

At another time he fights the constables who seek to take him into custody for debt. Even at Gad's Hill he is the last of the robbers to run away, and does not flee until he is left to cope with two assailants. On the bloody field of Shrewsbury he leads his "ragamuffins" where they are "peppered," so that out of one hundred and fifty not three remain alive, according to his own meditation.

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His feigning death on the same battlefield was a deliberate although ignoble stratagem, not an exhibition of fright. "It was a time to counterfeit," says Falstaff.

His reputation seems to have been that of a good fighter. Dame Quickly says it may cost some of the peace officers their lives to take him; that "he will stab," "will foin (thrust), like any devil." And Justice Shallow says Falstaff when but a lad "broke Schoggan's head." Coleville of the Dale, a valiant knight, surrenders to him at Shrewsbury in terms implying that Falstaff is a man of military reputation:

I think you are Sir John Falstaff, and in that thought yield me.

Prince Henry, in a time of peril to the throne, obtains for Sir John a military command. And when the dissolute knight is carousing, "a dozen captains" "stand at door," asking for him, thus indicating that his leadership is sought.

The Earl of Westmoreland addresses Falstaff familiarly, as a man of consequence, telling him it is time they joined the King; that "the King looks for us all." And in an im-

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portant scene the King's attendants are Prince Henry, Lord John of Lancaster, the Earl of Westmoreland, Sir Walter Blount, and Sir John Falstaff.

So it would appear, from such circumstances and incidents, that Falstaff is not a constitutional coward, governed by fear, but rather a man who, as he says himself, fights no longer than he sees reason for fighting.

It must be admitted, on the other hand, that there is much in the plays to support the general view of Falstaff as a poltroon. At Gad's Hill he roars for mercy as he runs from the Prince and Poins, and afterwards they twit him for his "cowardice." In "The Merry Wives" he hides himself in a buck-basket, under soiled linen, rather than face discovery and danger, and in a like situation of peril he is disguised as an old woman and soundly beaten with a cudgel while he seeks safety in flight. And the opinion of Mistresses Ford and Page as to his lack of courage is but too plainly indicated in the text.

Yet, after all is said, it remains true that Falstaff seems never to lose his wits, but, on the contrary, appears always resourceful, cool, and

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self-possessed, ready to take advantage of every favourable opportunity. He confronts adversity with a smile, and turns misfortune into a jest. *

That Shakespeare meant Falstaff to be more or less contradictory may be inferred from the remark of Prince Henry that "he is the strangest fellow." Maurice Morgann aptly sums up the incongruities of this remarkable character in these words:

"At once young and old, dupe and wit, harmless and wicked, with natural courage but no honour; knave without malice, liar without deceit, knight, gentleman, and soldier without dignity or decency."

Scarcely less peculiar and unique than Falstaff himself are his retainers — Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol. All are rascals, but each has well-marked individuality.

In personal appearance Bardolph is distinguished by a fiery-red nose, which is the subject of many of Falstaff's witticisms. On the field of battle (King Henry V, act 3, scene 2), Bardolph is the only one of the precious trio who does not show the white feather. When discarded by Falstaff he turns tapster, Pistol

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saying of him, in characteristic phrase, "His mind is not heroic." The last word of Bardolph is that he is "like to be executed for robbing a church" (King Henry V, áct 3, scene 6).

Pistol is "a sneaking bully," a bombastic, swaggering braggart, fond of high-sounding, classical phrases borrowed from plays current at the time, and most ludicrously bungled in his vain speech. He is best pictured in the words of the page in "King Henry V": "He hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword." In a laughable scene in the same play, Pistol is compelled to "eat the leek."

By contrast with Pistol, Corporal Nym is very quiet and of few words, but both at times display wit. Nym is a great coward when there is any real danger. He is a most fantastic and bombastic knave, pressing the word "humour" into service on all possible occasions — a drawing, affected rogue.

These three worthies are cut-purses and pick-pockets. And Falstaff himself (in "King Henry IV") speaks of "purse-taking" (robbery) as his "vocation." Both Falstaff and his followers deserved hanging, under the severe

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criminal laws of the period, which made robbery and larceny capital offences. Falstaff had even sunk so low as to share in the proceeds of a petty theft. "Didst thou not share: hadst thou not fifteen pence?" asks Pistol, when Falstaff reminds him of Mistress Bridget's loss of the handle of her fan.

Closely associated with Falstaff, as a boon companion, is the dissolute but keen-witted young Prince of Wales, whom he familiarly calls "Hal" (afterwards King Henry V). The first scene in which they appear is "an apartment in a tavern," in the first act of King Henry IV, and they banter each other in this fashion:

Fal. Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?

P. Hen. Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? . . .

Fal. Indeed, you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phœbus,—he, *that wandering knight so fair*. And, I pr'ythee, sweet wag, when thou art king,—as, God save

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thy grace (majesty, I should say; for grace thou wilt have none),—

P. Hen. What, none?

Fal. No, by my troth; not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter.

P. Hen. Well, how then? come, roundly, roundly.

Fal. Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty; let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon; and let men say we be men of good government, being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.

P. Hen. Thou sayest well, and it holds well too; for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is, by the moon. As, for proof, now: a purse of gold most resolutely snatched on Monday night, and most dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with swearing *lay by*, and spent with crying *bring in*; now in as low an ebb as the foot of the ladder, and by and by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows.

They proceed to jest about tavern reckonings:

P. Hen. Did I ever call thee to pay thy part?

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Fal. No; I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there.

P. Hen. Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch; and where it would not, I have used my credit.

Fal. Yea, and so used it that, were it not here apparent that thou art heir-apparent,—but, I pr'ythee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? and resolution thus fobbed as it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

P. Hen. No; thou shalt.

Fal. Shall I? O rare! By the Lord, I'll be a brave judge.

P. Hen. Thou judgest false already: I mean, thou shalt have the hanging of the thieves, and so become a rare hangman.

Fal. Well, Hal, well; and in some sort it jumps with my humour as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you.

P. Hen. For obtaining of suits?

Fal. Yea, for obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no lean wardrobe. 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib-cat or a lugged bear.

P. Hen. Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.

Fal. Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bag-pipe.

P. Hen. What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moor-ditch?

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Fal. Thou hast the most unsavoury similes, and art, indeed, the most comparative, rascal-est,—sweet young prince,—but, Hal, I pr'ythee, trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought. An old lord of the council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir,—but I marked him not; and yet he talked very wisely,—but I regarded him not; and yet he talked wisely, and in the street too.

P. Hen. Thou didst well; for wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it.

Fal. O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art, indeed, able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal,—God forgive thee for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing; and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over; by the Lord, an I do not, I am a villain: I'll be damned for never a king's son in Christendom.

P. Hen. Where shall we take a purse to-morrow, Jack?

Fal. Where thou wilt, lad; I'll make one; an I do not, call me villain, and baffle me.

P. Hen. I see a good amendment of life in thee,—from praying to purse-taking.

Fal. Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal; 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.—

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Poins, a highwayman, comes in, and familiar greetings ensue. He tells them of a robbery he has planned for four o'clock on the following morning at Gad's Hill, of certain pilgrims and traders, and asks them to take part in it. Falstaff quickly assents, but the prince demurs. Falstaff then takes his leave, the prince saying:

Farewell, thou latter spring! Farewell, All-hallown summer!

Poins then proposes to the prince, as a "jest," that Falstaff, Bardolph, one Peto, and one Gadshill shall rob the men he has described, and that then the Prince and he (Poins) shall rob Falstaff and his companions. The prince assents. It is arranged that the two shall appoint a place of meeting with Falstaff and the others, but fail to appear, when Falstaff and his fellow-rogues shall venture upon the exploit themselves, after which the prince and Poins, disguised in masks and suits of buckram, shall set upon them and rob them of their booty.

"The virtue of the jest," Poins explains, will be the lies that Falstaff will afterwards tell when they meet him at supper, and in their "reproof."

Poins takes his leave, and the prince, in a

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soliloquy, likens himself to the sun behind a cloud, and discloses his intention eventually to throw off his loose behaviour and redeem himself in the eyes of men.

The robbery takes place as planned by Poins, the prince first secretly removing Falstaff's horse, so the corpulent knight is compelled to walk. Falstaff protests to his fellows that "eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles a-foot" with him. As they are in the act of dividing their booty, the prince and Poins, disguised, set upon them, demanding the money. Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill immediately run away, and Falstaff also, after a blow or two, leaving the plunder. The prince says to Poins:

Falstaff sweats to death, and lards the lean earth as he walks along. Were it not for laughing, I should pity him.

Poins. How the rogue roared!

They all meet again at the Boar's Head tavern in Eastcheap, London. The prince and Poins are already there when Falstaff and the other robbers enter, and the following colloquy ensues:

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Poins. Welcome, Jack: where hast thou been?

Fal. A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! marry, and amen! — Give me a cup of sack, boy.— Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether-stocks, and mend them and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! — Give me a cup of sack, rogue.— Is there no virtue extant?

[*He drinks.*]

P. Hen. Didst thou never see Titan kiss a dish of butter? pitiful-hearted Titan, that melted at the sweet tale of the sun! if thou didst, then behold that compound.

Fal. You rogue, here's lime in this sack too: there is nothing but roguery to be found in villainous man: yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it,— a villainous coward.— Go thy ways, old Jack, die when thou wilt: if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring. There live not three good men unchanged in England; and one of them is fat, and grows old: God help the while! a bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver; I could sing psalms or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

P. Hen. How now, woolsack! what mutter you?

Fal. A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of

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wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales!

Fal. Are you not a coward? answer me to that:— and Poins there?

Poins. Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me coward, I'll stab thee.

Fal. I call thee coward! I'll see thee damned ere I call thee coward: but I would give a thousand pound I could run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders,—you care not who sees your back: call you that backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing! give me them that will face me.— Give me a cup of sack:— I am a rogue if I drunk to-day.

P. Hen. O villain! thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunkenest last.

Fal. All's one for that. A plague of all cowards, still say I. [*He drinks.*]

P. Hen. What's the matter?

Fal. What's the matter! there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

P. Hen. Where is it, Jack? where is it?

Fal. Where is it! taken from us it is: a hundred upon poor four of us.

P. Hen. What, a hundred, man?

Fal. I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours to-

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gether. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through; my sword hacked like a hand-saw,—*ecce signum!* I never dealt better since I was a man: all would not do. A plague of all cowards!—Let them speak: if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains, and the sons of darkness.

P. Hen. Speak, sirs; how was it?

Gads. We four set upon some dozen,—

Fal. Sixteen at least, my lord.

Gads. And bound them.

Peto. No, no, they were not bound.

Fal. You rogue, they were bound, every man of them; or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

Gads. As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us,—

Fal. And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

P. Hen. What, fought ye with them all?

Fal. All! I know not what ye call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish: if there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

P. Hen. Pray God, you have not murdered some of them.

Fal. Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two of them; two I am sure I have

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paid,—two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal,—if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward;—here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me,—

P. Hen. What, four? thou saidst but two even now.

Fal. Four, Hal; I told thee four.

Poins. Ay, ay, he said four.

Fal. These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

P. Hen. Seven? why, there were but four even now in buckram.

Poins. Ay, four in buckram suits.

Fal. Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

P. Hen. Pr'ythee, let him alone; we shall have more anon.

Fal. Dost thou hear me, Hal?

P. Hen. Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

Fal. Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of,—

P. Hen. So, two more already.

Fal. Their points being broken,—

Poins. Down fell their hose.

Fal. Began to give me ground: but I followed me close, came in foot and hand; and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid.

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P. Hen. O monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two!

Fal. But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back and let drive at me;— for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

P. Hen. These lies are like the father that begets them,— gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brained guts, thou nott-pated fool, thou . . . obscene, greasy tallow-keech,—

Fal. What, art thou mad? art thou mad? is not the truth the truth?

P. Hen. Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand? come, tell us your reason: what sayest thou to this?

Poins. Come, your reason, Jack,— your reason.

Fal. What, upon compulsion? No; were I at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! if reasons were as plenty as blackberries I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

P. Hen. I'll be no longer guilty of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse back-breaker, this huge hill of flesh,—

Fal. Away, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's tongue, . . . you stock-fish,—

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O for breath to utter what is like thee! — you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing-tuck,—

P. Hen. Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again: and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

Poins. Mark, Jack.

P. Hen. We two saw you four set on four; you bound them, and were masters of their wealth.— Mark now, how a plain tale shall put you down.— Then did we two set on you four; and, with a word, out-faced you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house: — and, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still ran and roared, as ever I heard a bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

Poins. Come, let's hear, Jack; what trick hast thou now?

Fal. By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true prince.

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Instinct is a great matter; I was a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money.— Hostess, clap to the doors [*to Hostess within*]:— watch to-night, pray to-morrow.— Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? Shall we have a play extempore?

P. Hen. Content;— and the argument shall be thy running away.

Fal. Ah, no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me!

Enter Hostess.

Host. O Jesu, my lord the prince,—

P. Hen. How now, my lady the hostess! — What sayest thou to me?

Host. Marry, my lord, there is a nobleman of the court at door would speak with you: he says he comes from your father.

P. Hen. Give him as much as will make him a royal man, and send him back again to my mother.

Fal. What manner of man is he?

Host. An old man.

Fal. What doth gravity out of his bed at midnight? — Shall I give him his answer?

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P. Hen. Pr'ythee, do, Jack.

Fal. Faith, and I'll send him packing.

[*Exit.*

P. Hen. Now, sirs:—by'r lady, you fought fair;—so did you, Peto;—so did you, Bardolph: you are lions too, you ran away upon instinct, you will not touch the true prince; no,—fie!

Bard. Faith, I ran when I saw others run.

P. Hen. Tell me now in earnest, how came Falstaff's sword so hacked?

Peto. Why, he hacked it with his dagger; and said he would swear truth out of England, but he would make you believe it was done in fight; and persuaded us to do the like.

Bard. Yea, and to tickle our noses with spear-grass to make them bleed; and then to beslobber our garments with it, and swear it was the blood of true men. I did that I did not this seven year before,—I blushed to hear his monstrous devices.

P. Hen. O villain, thou stolest a cup of sack eighteen years ago, and wert taken with the manner, and ever since thou hast blushed extempore. Thou hadst fire and sword on thy side, and yet thou rannest away: what instinct hadst thou for it?

Bard. My lord, do you see these meteors? do you behold these exhalations?

P. Hen. I do.

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Bard. What think you they portend?

P. Hen. Hot livers and cold purses.

Bard. Cholera, my lord, if rightly taken.

P. Hen. No, if rightly taken, halter.—
Here comes lean Jack, here comes bare-bone.

Re-enter FALSTAFF.

How now, my sweet creature of bombast!
How long is't ago, Jack, since thou sawest thine
own knee?

Fal. My own knee! when I was about thy
years, Hal, I was not an eagle's talon in the
waist; I could have crept into any alderman's
thumb-ring: a plague of sighing and grief! it
blows a man up like a bladder.— There's vil-
lainous news abroad: here was Sir John Bracy
from your father; you must to the court in the
morning.

Falstaff proceeds to relate that the Earl of
Northumberland, Henry Percy, his son (Hot-
spur), with the Earl of Douglas, Owen Glen-
dower and others, had taken the field against
King Henry. Falstaff continues:

But tell me, Hal, art thou not horribly
afear'd? thou being heir-apparent, could the
world pick thee out three such enemies again
as that fiend Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that

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devil Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? doth not thy blood thrill at it?

P. Hen. Not a whit, i' faith; I lack some of thy instinct.

Fal. Well, thou wilt be horribly chid tomorrow when thou comest to thy father: if thou love me, practise an answer.

P. Hen. Do thou stand for my father! and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

Fal. Shall I? content:—this chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown.

P. Hen. Thy state is taken for a joint-stool, thy golden scepter for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown!

Fal. Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou be moved.—Give me a cup of sack to make mine eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyzes' vein.

P. Hen. Well, here is my leg.

Fal. And here is my speech.—Stand aside, nobility.

Host. O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!

Fal. Weep not, sweet queen; for trickling tears are vain.

Host. O, the father, how he holds his countenance!

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Fal. For God's sake, lords, convey my
tristful queen;

For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.

Host. O Jesu, he doth it as like one of
these harlotry players as ever I see!

Fal. Peace, good pint-pot; peace, good
tickle-brain.—Harry, I do not only marvel
where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou
art accompanied: for though the camomile, the
more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet
youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears.
That thou art my son, I have partly thy
mother's word, partly my own opinion; but
chiefly a villainous trick of thine eye, and a
foolish hanging of thy nether lip, that doth
warrant me. If, then, thou be son to me, here
lies the point;—why, being son to me, art
thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of
heaven prove a micher, and eat blackberries? a
question not to be asked. Shall the son of
England prove a thief, and take purses? a
question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry,
which thou hast often heard of, and it is known
to many in our land by the name of pitch:
this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth
defile; so doth the company thou keepest: for,
Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink,
but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion;
not in words only, but in woes also:—and
yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often

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noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

P. Hen. What manner of man, an it like your majesty.

Fal. A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r lady, inclining to three-score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff: if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If, then, the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff: him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

P. Hen. Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

Fal. Depose me? if thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poulter's hare.

P. Hen. Well, here I am set.

Fal. And here I stand:—judge, my masters.

P. Hen. Now, Harry, whence come you?

Fal. My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

P. Hen. The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

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Fal. 'Sblood, my lord, they are false:—nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

P. Hen. Sworest thou, ungracious boy? henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee, in the likeness of a fat old man,—a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox, with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that gray iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villainy? wherein villainous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?

Fal. I would your grace would take me with you: whom means your grace?

P. Hen. That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

Fal. My lord, the man I know.

P. Hen. I know thou dost.

Fal. But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old,—the more the pity,—his white hairs do witness it. . . . If sack and

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sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins: but, for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company: — banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

At this point a knocking is heard, and Bardolph runs in to say that the Sheriff, "with a most monstrous watch," is at the door; to search the house. Falstaff exclaims, with remarkable coolness, in view of the fact that he is in imminent danger of arrest for a felony:

Out, you rogue! — play out the play: I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.

With like nonchalance, Falstaff exchanges jests with the prince, saying:

. . . if you will deny the sheriff, so; if not, let him enter: if I become not a cart as well as another man, a plague on my bringing up! I hope I shall as soon be strangled with a halter as another.

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By direction of the prince, Falstaff hides behind the arras (tapestry hangings). The Sheriff is then admitted, and the prince pledges his word that he will send Falstaff on the following day to answer to the charge of robbery, with which assurance the Sheriff retires.

P. Hen. This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's. Go, call him forth.

Poins. Falstaff! — fast asleep behind the arras, and snorting like a horse.

P. Hen. Hark, how hard he fetches breath. Search his pockets. [*POINS searches.*] What hast thou found?

Poins. Nothing but papers, my lord.

P. Hen. Let's see what they be: read them.

Poins. [*Reads.*] Item, A capon, 2s. 2d.
Item, Sauce, os. 4d.
Item, Sack, two gallons, 5s. 8d.
Item, Anchovies and sack after supper, 2s. 6d.
Item, Bread, os. 0½d.

P. Hen. O monstrous! but one halfpenny-worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! — What there is else, keep close; we'll read it at more advantage: there let him sleep till day. I'll to the court in the morning. We must all to the wars, and thy place shall be honourable. I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot; and I know his death will be a march of twelve-score. The money shall be paid

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back again with advantage. Be with me be-
times in the morning; and so, good-morrow,
Poins.

Poins. Good-morrow, good my lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

In the third act of the play a room in the
same tavern is the scene. Enter Falstaff and
Bardolph:

Fal. Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely
since this last action? do I not bate? do I not
dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like
an old lady's loose gown; I am withered like an
old apple-john. Well, I'll repent, and that
suddenly, while I am in some liking; I shall be
out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no
strength to repent. An I have not forgotten
what the inside of a church is made of, I am a
pepper-corn, a brewer's horse: the inside of a
church! Company, villainous company, hath
been the spoil of me.

Bard. Sir John, you are so fretful, you can-
not live long.

Fal. Why, there is it: come, sing me a
. . . song; make me merry. I was as virtu-
ously given as a gentleman need to be; virtuous
enough; swore little; diced not above seven
times a week; . . . paid money that I bor-
rowed — three or four times: lived well, and

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in good compass: and now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

Bard. Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass,— out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

Fal. Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life: thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop,— but 'tis in the nose of thee; thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp.

Bard. Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

Fal. No, I'll be sworn; I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a Death's head or a *memento mori*: I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire, and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be, *By this fire, that's God's angel*; but thou art altogether given over; and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou rannest up Gadshill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an *ignis fatuus* or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern: but the sack that thou hast

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drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap at the dearest chandler's in Europe. I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire any time this two-and-thirty years; God reward me for it!

.

Enter Hostess.

How now, Dame Partlet the hen! have you inquired yet who picked my pocket?

Host. Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? do you think I keep thieves in my house? I have searched, I have inquired, so has my husband, man by man, boy by boy, servant by servant: the tithe of a hair was never lost in my house before.

Fal. You lie, hostess: Bardolph was shaved, and lost many a hair; and I'll be sworn my pocket was picked. Go to, you are a woman, go.

Host. Who, I? no; I defy thee: God's light, I was never called so in mine own house before.

Fal. Go to, I know you well enough.

Host. No, Sir John; you do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John: you owe me money, Sir John; and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it: I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back.

Fal. Dowlas, filthy dowlas: I have given

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them away to bakers' wives, and they have made bolters of them.

Host. Now, as I am a true woman, holland of eight shillings an ell. You owe money here besides, Sir John, for your diet and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four-and-twenty pound.

Fal. He had his part of it; let him pay.

Host. He? alas, he is poor; he hath nothing.

Fal. How! poor? look upon his face; what call you rich? let them coin his nose, let them coin his cheeks: I'll not pay a denier. What, will you make a younker of me? shall I not take mine ease in mine inn, but I shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal-ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

Host. O Jesu, I have heard the prince tell him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper!

Fal. How! the prince is a Jack, a sneak-cup: 'sblood, an he were here I would cudgel him like a dog if he would say so.

Enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS, marching.

FALSTAFF meets the PRINCE, playing on his truncheon like a fife.

Fal. How now, lad! is the wind in that door, i' faith? must we all march?

Bard. Yea, two and two, Newgate-fashion.

Host. My lord, I pray you, hear me.

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P. Hen. What sayest thou, Mistress Quickly? How does thy husband? I love him well; he is an honest man.

Host. Good my lord, hear me.

Fal. Pr'ythee, let her alone, and list to me.

P. Hen. What sayest thou, Jack?

Fal. The other night I fell asleep here behind the arras, and had my pocket picked: . . . they pick pockets.

P. Hen. What didst thou lose, Jack?

Fal. Wilt thou believe me, Hal? three or four bonds of forty pound a-piece, and a sealing of my grandfather's.

P. Hen. A trifle, some eight-penny matter.

Host. So I told him, my lord; and I said I heard your grace say so: and, my lord, he speaks most vilely of you, like a foul-mouthed man as he is, and said he would cudgel you.

P. Hen. What! he did not?

Host. There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.

Fal. There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune; nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox; and for womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go.

Host. Say, what thing? what thing?

Fal. What thing! why, a thing to thank God on.

Host. I am no thing to thank God on, I

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would thou shouldst know it; I am an honest man's wife; and, setting thy knighthood aside, thou art a knave to call me so.

P. Hen. Thou sayest true, hostess; and he slanders thee most grossly.

Host. So he doth you, my lord; and said this other day you ought him a thousand pound.

P. Hen. Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

Fal. A thousand pound, Hal! a million: thy love is worth a million; thou owest me thy love.

Host. Nay, my lord, he call'd you Jack, and said he would cudgel you.

Fal. Did I, Bardolph?

Bard. Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

Fal. Yea,—if he said my ring was copper.

P. Hen. I say 'tis copper: darest thou be as good as thy word now?

Fal. Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare: but as thou art prince, I fear thee, as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp.

P. Hen. And why not as the lion?

Fal. The king himself is to be feared as the lion: dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? nay, an I do, I pray God my girdle break.

P. Hen. . . . Charge an honest woman with picking thy pocket! Why, thou . . .

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impudent, embossed rascal, if there were anything in thy pocket but tavern-reckonings, . . . and one poor penny-worth of sugar-candy to make thee long-winded,—if thy pocket were enriched with any other injuries but these, I am a villain: and yet you will stand to it; you will not pocket-up wrong: art thou not ashamed?

Fal. Dost thou hear, Hal? thou knowest in the state of innocency Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villainy? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty. You confess, then, you picked my pocket?

P. Hen. It appears so by the story.

Fal. Hostess, I forgive thee: go, make ready breakfast; love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy guests: thou shalt find me tractable to any honest reason: thou seest I am pacified.—Still?—Nay, pr'ythee, be gone. [*Exit Hostess.*] Now, Hal, to the news at court: for the robbery, lad,—how is that answered?

P. Hen. O, my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to thee:—the money is paid back again.

Fal. O, I do not like that paying back; 'tis a double labour.

P. Hen. I am good friends with my father, and may do anything.

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Fal. Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou doest, and do it with unwashed hands too.

Bard. Do, my lord.

P. Hen. I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

Fal. I would it had been of horse. Where shall I find one that can steal well? O for a fine thief, of the age of two-and-twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided. Well, God be thanked for these rebels,—they offend none but the virtuous: I laud them, I praise them.

The next appearance of Falstaff is upon a public road near Coventry, with Bardolph. The knight directs Bardolph to go before him to the town and fill him a bottle of sack, and directs that his soldiers shall march through. Bardolph departs, and Falstaff soliloquises:

If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soused gurnet. I have misused the king's press damnably. I have got, in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers, three hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but good householders, yeomen's sons; inquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the bans; such a commodity of warm slaves as had as lief hear the devil as a drum; such as fear the report of a caliver worse than a struck

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fowl or a hurt wild-duck. I pressed me none but such toasts-and-butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins' heads, and they have bought out their services; and now my whole charge consists of ancients, corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen of companies, slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked his sores; and such as, indeed, were never soldiers, but discarded unjust serving-men, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters, and ostlers trade-fallen; the cankers of a calm world and a long peace; ten times more dishonourable ragged than an old-faced ancient: and such have I, to fill up the rooms of them that have bought out their services, that you would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks. A mad fellow met me on the way, and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets, and pressed the dead bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat: — nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves on; for, indeed, I had the most of them out of prison. There's but a shirt and a half in all my company; and the half-shirt is two napkins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders like a herald's coat without sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stolen from my host at

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Saint Alban's, or the red-nose innkeeper of Daventry. But that's all one; they'll find linen enough on every hedge.

Enter PRINCE HENRY and WESTMORELAND.

P. Hen. How now, blown Jack! how now, quilt!

Fal. What, Hal! how now, mad wag! what a devil dost thou in Warwickshire?— My good Lord of Westmoreland, I cry you mercy: I thought your honour had already been at Shrewsbury.

West. Faith, Sir John, 'tis more than time that I were there, and you too; but my powers are there already. The king, I can tell you, looks for us all: we must away all night.

Fal. Tut, never fear me: I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.

P. Hen. I think, to steal cream, indeed; for thy theft hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose fellows are these that come after?

Fal. Mine, Hal, mine.

P. Hen. I did never see such pitiful rascals.

Fal. Tut, tut; good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better: tush, man, mortal men, mortal men.

West. Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare,— too beggarly.

Fal. Faith, for their poverty, I know not

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where they had that; and for their bareness, I am sure they never learned that of me.

P. Hen. No, I'll be sworn; unless you call three fingers on the ribs bare. But, sirrah, make haste: Percy is already in the field.

Fal. What, is the king encamped?

West. He is, Sir John: I fear we shall stay too long.

Fal. Well,

To the latter end of a fray and the beginning
of a feast

Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest. [*Exeunt.*]

Sir John next figures in the opening scene of the fifth act of the play, in attendance upon the king, with Princes Henry and John and Sir Walter Blunt, in the royal camp near Shrewsbury. There is a brief dialogue between Prince Henry and Falstaff when the others have retired, and the latter then gives vent to his famous views regarding the nature of honour.

Fal. Hal, if thou see me down in the battle, and bestride me, so; 'tis a point of friendship.

P. Hen. Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friendship. Say thy prayers, and farewell.

Fal. I would it were bed-time, Hal, and all well.

P. Hen. Why, thou owest God a death.

[*Exit.*]

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Fal. 'Tis not due yet; I would be loth to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on? how then? Can honour set-to a leg? no: or an arm? no: or take away the grief of a wound? no. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? no. What is honour? a word. What is in that word, honour? What is that honour? air. A trim reckoning!—Who hath it? he that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? no. Doth he hear it? no. Is it insensible, then? yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? no. Why? detraction will not suffer it:—therefore I'll none of it: honour is a mere scutcheon: and so ends my catechism. [*Exit.*]

The third scene of the same act is the battle-field near Shrewsbury. Sir Walter Blunt encounters Douglas, and is left dead upon the ground. While the noise of the combat continues Falstaff enters.

Fal. Though I could 'scape shot-free at London, I fear the shot here: here's no scoring but upon the pate.—Soft! who art thou? Sir Walter Blunt:—there's honour for you: here's no vanity!—I am as hot as molten lead, and as heavy too: God keep lead out of me! I

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need no more weight than my own bowels.— I have led my raggamuffins where they are peppered: there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive; and they are for the town's end, to beg during life.— But who comes here?

Enter PRINCE HENRY.

P. Hen. What, stand'st thou idle here?
lend me thy sword:

Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,
Whose deaths are unreveng'd: pr'ythee, lend
me thy sword.

Fal. O Hal, I pr'ythee, give me leave to breathe awhile.— Turk Gregory never did such deeds in arms as I have done this day. I have paid Percy, I have made him sure.

P. Hen. He is, indeed; and living to kill thee. Lend me thy sword, I pr'ythee.

Fal. Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive thou gettest not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.

P. Hen. Give it me: what, is it in the case?

Fal. Ay, Hal; 'tis hot, 'tis hot; there's that will sack a city.

[*The* PRINCE *draws out a bottle of sack.*

P. Hen. What, is't time to jest and dally now?
[*Throws it at him, and exit.*

Fal. Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so; if he do not, if

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I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath: give me life: which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlooked for, and there's an end. [Exit.]

On another part of the plain Prince Henry and Hotspur meet, and, while they measure swords, Douglas fights with Falstaff, who falls as if he were dead. Douglas retires, and Hotspur falls and dies. The prince laments his foe's untimely end, and, seeing Falstaff lying still upon the ground, exclaims:

What, old acquaintance! could not all this flesh
Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!
I could have better spar'd a better man.
O, I should have a heavy miss of thee,
If I were much in love with vanity.
Death hath not struck so fat a deer to-day,
Though many dearer, in this bloody fray.
Embowell'd will I see thee by and by:
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie. [Exit.]

Fal. [Rising slowly.] Embowelled! if thou embowel me to-day, I'll give you leave to powder me and eat me too to-morrow. 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit: to die is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the counterfeit of a

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man who hath not the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed. The better part of valour is discretion; in which better part I have saved my life. Zounds, I am afraid of this gunpowder Percy, though he be dead; how if he should counterfeit too, and rise? I am afraid he would prove the better counterfeit. Therefore I'll make him sure: yea, and I'll swear I killed him. Why may not he rise as well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me. Therefore, sirrah [*stabbing him*], with a new wound in your thigh, come you along with me.

[*Takes HOTSPUR on his back.*]

Re-enter PRINCE HENRY *and* PRINCE JOHN.

P. John. But, soft! whom have we here?
Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?

P. Hen. I did; I saw him dead, breathless
and bleeding

On the ground.—

Art thou alive? or is it fantasy

That plays upon our eyesight? I pr'ythee,
speak;

We will not trust our eyes without our ears:—
Thou art not what thou seem'st.

Fal. No, that's certain; I am not a double

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man: but if I be not Jack Falstaff, then am I a Jack. There is Percy [*throwing the body down*]: if your father will do me any honour, so; if not, let him kill the next Percy himself. I look to be either earl or duke, I can assure you.

P. Hen. Why, Percy I killed myself, and saw thee dead.

Fal. Didst thou? — Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying! I grant you I was down and out of breath, and so was he; but we rose both at an instant, and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. If I may be believed, so; if not, let them that should reward valour bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh: if the man were alive, and would deny it, zounds, I would make him eat a piece of my sword.

P. John. This is the strangest tale that e'er I heard.

P. Hen. This is the strangest fellow, brother John.—

Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back:
For my part, if a lie may do thee grace,
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.
The trumpet sounds retreat; the day is
ours. . . .

[*Exeunt P. HENRY and P. JOHN.*]

Fal. I'll follow, as they say, for reward.

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He that rewards me, God reward him! If I do grow great, I'll grow less; for I'll purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly, as a nobleman should do. [*Exit, bearing off the body.*]

In the second part of the play of "King Henry IV," Falstaff appears on a London street, with his page bearing his sword and buckler.

Fal. Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me: the brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men. I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one. If the prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgment. Thou . . . mandrake, thou art fitter to be worn in my cap than to wait at my heels. I was never manned with an agate till now: but I will set you neither in gold nor silver, but in vile apparel, and send you back again to your master, for a jewel,—the juvenal, the prince your master, whose chin is not yet fledged. I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one on his cheek; and yet he will not stick to say his face is a face-royal:

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God may finish it when he will, it is not a hair amiss yet: he may keep it still as a face-royal, for a barber shall never earn sixpence out of it; and yet he will be crowing as if he had writ man ever since his father was a bachelor. He may keep his own grace, but he is almost out of mine, I can assure him.—What said Master Dumbleton about the satin for my short cloak and my slops?

Page. He said, sir, you should procure him better assurance than Bardolph: he would not take his bond and yours; he liked not the security.

Fal. Let him be damned, like the glutton! may his tongue be hotter!—A . . . rascally yea-forsooth knave! to bear a gentleman in hand, and then stand upon security!— . . . I had as lief they would put ratsbane in my mouth as offer to stop it with security.

Page. Sir, here comes the nobleman that committed the prince for striking him about Bardolph.

Fal. Wait close; I will not see him.

Enter the Lord Chief-Justice and an Attendant.

Ch. Just. What's he that goes there?

Atten. Falstaff, an 't please your lordship.

Ch. Just. He that was in question for the robbery?

Atten. He, my lord: but he hath since done

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good service at Shrewsbury; and, as I hear, is now going with some charge to the Lord John of Lancaster.

Ch. Just. What, to York? Call him back again.

Atten. Sir John Falstaff!

Fal. Boy, tell him, I am deaf.

Page. You must speak louder; my master is deaf.

Ch. Just. I am sure he is, to the hearing of anything good.—Go, pluck him by the elbow; I must speak with him.

Atten. Sir John,—

Fal. What! a young knave, and begging! Is there not wars? is there not employment? Doth not the king lack subjects? Do not the rebels need soldiers? Though it be a shame to be on any side but one, it is worse shame to beg than to be on the worst side, were it worse than the name of rebellion can tell how to make it.

Atten. You mistake me, sir.

Fal. Why, sir, did I say you were an honest man? setting my knighthood and my soldiership aside, I had lied in my throat if I had said so.

Atten. I pray you, sir, then set your knighthood and your soldiership aside; and give me leave to tell you, you lie in your throat, if you say I am any other than an honest man.

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Fal. I give thee leave to tell me so! I lay aside that which grows to me! If thou gettest any leave of me, hang me; if thou takest leave, thou wert better be hanged! You hunt-counter, hence! avant!

Atten. Sir, my lord would speak with you.

Ch. Just. Sir John Falstaff, a word with you.

Fal. My good lord!—God give your lordship good time of day. I am glad to see your lordship abroad: I heard say your lordship was sick: I hope your lordship goes abroad by advice. Your lordship, though not clean past your youth, hath yet some smack of age in you, some relish of the saltness of time; and I most humbly beseech your lordship to have a reverent care of your health.

Ch. Just. Sir John, I sent for you before your expedition to Shrewsbury.

Fal. An 't please your lordship, I hear his majesty is returned with some discomfort from Wales.

Ch. Just. I talk not of his majesty:—you would not come when I sent for you.

Fal. And I hear, moreover, his highness is fallen into . . . apoplexy.

Ch. Just. Well, God mend him! I pray you let me speak with you.

Fal. This apoplexy is, as I take it, a kind

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of lethargy, an 't please your lordship; a kind of sleeping in the blood, a . . . tingling.

Ch. Just. What tell you me of it? be it as it is.

Fal. It hath its original from much grief, from study, and perturbation of the brain! I have read the cause of his effects in Galen; it is a kind of deafness.

Ch. Just. I think you are fallen into the disease; for you hear not what I say to you.

Fal. Very well, my lord, very well: rather, an 't please you, it is the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that I am troubled withal.

Ch. Just. To punish you by the heels would amend the attention of your ears; and I care not if I do become your physician.

Fal. I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient: your lordship may minister the potion of imprisonment to me in respect of poverty; but how should I be your patient to follow your prescriptions, the wise may make some dram of a scruple, or, indeed, a scruple itself.

Ch. Just. I sent for you when there were matters against you for your life, to come speak with me.

Fal. As I was then advised by my learned counsel in the laws of this land-service, I did not come.

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Ch. Just. Well, the truth is, Sir John, you live in great infamy.

Fal. He that buckles him in my belt cannot live in less.

Ch. Just. Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.

Fal. I would it were otherwise; I would my means were greater and my waist slenderer.

Ch. Just. You have misled the youthful prince.

Fal. The young prince hath misled me: I am the fellow with the great belly, and he my dog.

Ch. Just. Well, I am loth to gall a new-healed wound: your day's service at Shrewsbury hath a little gilded over your night's exploit on Gadshill: you may thank the unquiet time for your quiet o'erposting that action.

Fal. My lord,—

Ch. Just. But since all is well, keep it so: wake not a sleeping wolf.

Fal. To wake a wolf is as bad as to smell a fox.

Ch. Just. What! you are as a candle, the better part burnt out.

Fal. A wassail candle, my lord; all tallow: if I did say of wax, my growth would approve the truth.

Ch. Just. There is not a white hair on your face but should have his effect of gravity.

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Fal. His effect of gravy, gravy, gravy.

Ch. Just. You follow the young prince up and down, like his ill angel.

Fal. Not so, my lord; your ill angel is light; but I hope he that looks upon me will take me without weighing: and yet, in some respects, I grant, I cannot go: — I cannot tell. Virtue is of so little regard in these costermonger times that true valour is turned bear-herd: pregnancy is made a tapster, and hath his quick wit wasted in giving reckonings: all the other gifts appertinent to man, as the malice of this age shapes them, are not worth a gooseberry. You that are old consider not the capacities of us that are young; you measure the heat of our livers with the bitterness of your galls: and we that are in the vaward of our youth, I must confess, are wags too.

Ch. Just. Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth, that are written down old with all the characters of age? Have you not a moist eye? a dry hand? a yellow cheek? a white beard? a decreasing leg? an increasing belly? Is not your voice broken? your wind short? your chin double? your wit single? and every part about you blasted with antiquity? and will you yet call yourself young? Fie, fie, fie, Sir John!

Fal. My lord, I was born about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white head,

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and something a round belly. For my voice, — I have lost it with hollaing and singing of anthems. To approve my youth further, I will not; the truth is, I am only old in judgment and understanding; and he that will caper with me for a thousand marks, let him lend me the money, and have at him. For the box o' the ear that the prince gave you,— he gave it like a rude prince, and you took it like a sensible lord. I have checked him for it; and the young lion repents; marry, not in ashes and sackcloth, but in new silk and old sack.

Ch. Just. Well, God send the prince a better companion!

Fal. God send the companion a better prince! I cannot rid my hands of him.

Ch. Just. Well, the king hath severed you and Prince Harry: I hear you are going with Lord John of Lancaster against the archbishop and the Earl of Northumberland.

Fal. Yea; I thank your pretty sweet wit for it. But look you, pray, all you that kiss my Lady Peace at home, that our armies join not in a hot day; for, by the Lord, I take but two shirts out with me, and I mean not to sweat extraordinarily: if it be a hot day, and I brandish anything but my bottle, I would I might never spit white again. There is not a dangerous action can peep out his head but I am thrust upon it: well, I cannot last ever: but it was

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always yet the trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing, to make it too common. If you will needs say I am an old man, you should give me rest. I would to God my name were not so terrible to the enemy as it is: I were better to be eaten to death with rust than to be scoured to nothing with perpetual motion.

Ch. Just. Well, be honest, be honest; and God bless your expedition!

Fal. Will your lordship lend me a thousand pound to furnish me forth?

Ch. Just. Not a penny, not a penny; you are too impatient to bear crosses. Fare you well: commend me to my cousin Westmoreland.

[*Exeunt* Chief-Justice and Attendant.

Fal. If I do, fillip me with a three-man beetle.

.
Fal. What money is in my purse?

Page. Seven groats and two pence.

Fal. I can get no remedy against this consumption of the purse: borrowing only lingers and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable. — Go bear this letter to my Lord of Lancaster; this to the prince; this to the Earl of Westmoreland; and this to old Mistress Ursula, whom I have weekly sworn to marry since I perceived the first white hair on my chin.

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About it; you know where to find me. [*Exit Page.*] . . . It is no matter if I do halt; I have the wars for my colour, and my pension shall seem the more reasonable. A good wit will make use of anything. I will turn diseases to commodity. [*Exit.*]

A second street scene in London opens with Constables Fang and Snare waiting to arrest Falstaff for debt, at the suit of Mistress Quickly, hostess of a tavern in Eastcheap. She warns them to be wary; that "he will foin (fence) like any devil; he will spare neither man, woman, nor child." She proceeds to lament because of his heavy debt to her, declaring:

I am undone by his going; I warrant you, he is an infinitive thing upon my score:—good Master Fang, hold him sure:—good Master Snare, let him not 'scape. . . . A hundred mark is a long loan for a poor, lone woman to bear: and I have borne, and borne, and borne. . . . There is no honesty in such dealing; unless a woman should be made an ass and a beast, to bear every knave's wrong. Yonder he comes; and that arrant malmsey-nose knave, Bardolph, with him. Do your offices, do your offices, Master Fang and Master Snare; do me, do me, do me your offices.

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Enter SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, Page, and BARDOLPH.

Fal. How now! whose mare's dead? what's the matter.

Fang. Sir John, I arrest you at the suit of Mistress Quickly.

Fal. Away, varlets! — Draw, Bardolph: cut me off the villain's head; throw the quean in the channel.

Host. Throw me in the channel! I'll throw thee in the channel. Wilt thou? wilt thou? thou bastardly rogue! — Murder, murder! O thou honeysuckle villain! wilt thou kill God's officers and the king's? O thou honey-seed rogue! thou art a honey-seed; a man-queller and a woman-queller.

Fal. Keep them off, Bardolph.

Fang. A rescue! a rescue!

Host. Good people, bring a rescue or two. — Thou wo't, wo't thou? thou wo't, wo't thou? do, do, thou rogue! do, thou hemp-seed!

Fal. Away, you scullion! you rampallian! you fustilarian! . . .

The Lord Chief Justice enters, stops the tumult, and, after making inquiry of the hostess, rebukes Falstaff for his wrong-doing and evil ways.

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Fal. What is the gross sum that I owe thee?

Host. Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and the money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gift goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor,—thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then, and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of pawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch the thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath: deny it, if thou canst!

Fal. My lord, this is a poor mad soul; and she says, up and down the town, that her eldest son is like you: she hath been in good case, and, the truth is, poverty hath distracted her. But for these foolish officers, I beseech you I may have redress against them. . . .

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The Chief Justice further rebukes Sir John and admonishes him to pay the hostess. Falstaff again asks for deliverance from the constables, "being upon hasty employment in the king's affairs." He takes the woman aside, and what here follows is heard to pass between them:

Fal. As I am a gentleman,—

Host. Nay, you said so before.

Fal. As I am a gentleman:— come, no more words of it.

Host. By this heavenly ground I tread on, I must be fain to pawn both my plate and the tapestry of my dining-chambers.

Fal. Glasses, glasses, is the only drinking: and for thy walls,— a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the Prodigal, or the German hunting in water-work, is worth a thousand of these bed-hangings and these fly-bitten tapestries. Let it be ten pound, if thou canst. Come, an it were not for thy humours, there is not a better wench in England. Go, wash thy face, and draw thy action. Come, thou must not be in this humour with me; dost not know me? come, come, I know thou wast set on to this.

Host. Pray thee, Sir John, let it be but twenty nobles: i' faith, I am loth to pawn my plate, so God save me, la.

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Fal. Let it alone; I'll make other shift: you'll be a fool still.

Host. Well, you shall have it, though I pawn my gown. I hope you'll come to supper. You'll pay me all together?

Fal. Will I live?

In the third act Falstaff and Bardolph appear in a courtyard before Justice Shallow's house in Gloucestershire, to which they have come on a recruiting mission. After half-a-dozen men, assembled by the foolish Justice, have been examined for military service by Sir John, in burlesque fashion, the selection is finally made as follows:

Fal. Come sir, which men shall I have?

Shal. Four of which you please.

Bard. Sir, a word with you:—I have three pound to free Mouldy and Bullcalf.

Fal. Go to; well.

Shal. Come, Sir John, which four will you have?

Fal. Do you choose for me.

Shal. Marry, then,—Mouldy, Bullcalf, Feeble, and Shadow.

Fal. Mouldy and Bullcalf:—for you, Mouldy, stay at home till you are past service: and for your part, Bullcalf,—grow until you come unto it: I will none of you.

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Shal. Sir John, Sir John, do not yourself wrong: they are your likeliest men, and I would have you served with the best.

Fal. Will you tell me, Master Shallow, how to choose a man? Care I for the limb, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man! Give me the spirit, Master Shallow.—Here's Wart;—you see what a ragged appearance it is: he shall charge you and discharge you, with the motion of a pewterer's hammer; come off, and on, swifter than he that gibbets-on the brewer's bucket. And this same half-faced fellow, Shadow,—give me this man: he presents no mark to the enemy; the foeman may with as great aim level at the edge of a penknife. And, for a retreat,—how swiftly will this Feeble, the woman's tailor, run off! O, give me the spare men, and spare me the great ones.—Put me a caliver into Wart's hand, Bardolph.

After Shallow and the others have left the scene, Falstaff remains and thus to himself ridicules the Justice:

. . . I do see the bottom of Justice Shallow. Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying! This same starved justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth, and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street; and every third word

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a lie, duer paid to the hearer than the Turk's tribute. I do remember him at Clement's-inn, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring: when he was naked, he was, for all the world, like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife: he was so forlorn that his dimensions to any thick sight were invincible: he was the very genius of famine: . . . he came ever in the rearward of the fashion; and sung those tunes to the over-scutch'd huswives that he heard the carmen whistle, and sware they were his fancies or his good-nights. And now is this Vice's dagger become a squire, and talks as familiarly of John of Gaunt as if he had been sworn brother to him; and I'll be sworn he never saw him but once in the Tilt-yard; and then he burst his head for crowding among the marshal's men. I saw it and told John of Gaunt he beat his own name; for you might have thrust him and all his apparel into an eel-skin; the case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him, a court: — and now he has land and beeves. Well, I will be acquainted with him if I return; and it shall go hard but I will make him a philosopher's two stones to me: if the young dace be a bait for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature, but I may snap at him. Let time shape, and there an end. [Exit.]

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Falstaff reappears in the fourth act. The scene is a forest in Yorkshire, where he encounters Sir John Coleville of the Dale, a knight of the forces opposed to the king. Falstaff arraigns him as a traitor, and Coleville surrenders, remarking:

I think you are Sir John Falstaff; and in that thought yield me.

This would appear to indicate that Falstaff had some military repute, and was not regarded as a poltroon. For Coleville is later addressed by Prince John as "a famous rebel," and his reply to the prince showed him to be courageous. Such a brave knight scarcely would have yielded to Falstaff without a blow had not the latter enjoyed some reputation for valour, however ill-deserved.

Immediately after Coleville's surrender, Prince John comes on the scene.

P. John. Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?

When everything is ended, then you come:
These tardy tricks of yours will, on my life,
One time or other break some gallows back.

Fal. I would be sorry, my lord, but it

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should be thus: I never knew yet but rebuke and check was the reward of valour. Do you think me a swallow, an arrow, or a bullet? have I, in my poor and old motion, the expedition of thought? I have speeded hither with the very extremest inch of possibility; I have foundered nine-score and odd posts: and here, travel tainted as I am, have, in my pure and immaculate valour, taken Sir John Colevile of the dale, a most furious knight and valourous enemy. But what of that? he saw me, and yielded; that I may justly say with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome,—I came, saw, and overcame.

P. John. It was more of his courtesy than your deserving.

Fal. I know not:—here he is, and here I yield him: and I beseech your grace, let it be booked with the rest of this day's deeds; or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the top of it, Colevile kissing my foot.

P. John. Fare you well, Falstaff: I, in my condition,
Shall better speak of you than you deserve.

[*Exeunt all but FAL.*]

Fal. I would you had but the wit: 'twere better than your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love

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me; nor a man cannot make him laugh; — but that's no marvel; he drinks no wine. . . . A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish and dull and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgetive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which delivered o'er to the voice,— the tongue,— which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is,— the warming of the blood; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice: but the sherris warms it, and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme: it illumineth the face; which, as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage: and this valour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and learning, a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil till sack commences it and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant; for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, sterile, and bare land, manured, husbanded, and tilled, with excellent endeavour of

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drinking good and good store of fertile sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them should be,— to forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack.

Sack, which Falstaff extolled so highly, and drank copiously, was a strong Spanish wine, probably sherry, or resembling it.

From the forest, attended by Bardolph, Falstaff proceeds to the home of Justice Shallow, in Gloucestershire, where he is made welcome, with profuse expressions of hospitality. But, as soon as he is left alone, the rotund knight satirises his host in this fashion :

If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master Shallow. It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his: they, by observing of him, do bear themselves like foolish justices; he, by conversing with them, is turned into a justice-like serving-man: their spirits are so married in conjunction with the participation of society that they flock together in consent, like so many wild geese. If I had a suit to Master Shallow, I would humour his men with the imputation of being near their master: if to his men, I would curry with Master Shallow that no man

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could better command his servants. It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another: therefore, let men take heed of their company. I will devise matter enough out of this Shallow to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions.

While Falstaff tarries, as a guest of the Justice, Pistol brings news of the death of the old king and of Prince Henry's succession to the throne.

Fal. Away, Bardolph! saddle my horse.— Master Robert Shallow, choose what office thou wilt in the land, 'tis thine.— Pistol, I will double-charge thee with dignities.

Bard. O joyful day!

I would not take a knighthood for my fortune.

Pist. What, I do bring good news?

Fal. Carry Master Silence to bed.— Master Shallow, my Lord Shallow, be what thou wilt; I am fortune's steward. Get on thy boots: we'll ride all night:— O sweet Pistol! — away, Bardolph! [*Exit* BARDOLPH.] — Come, Pistol, utter more to me; and, withal, devise something to do thyself good.— Boot, boot, Master Shallow: I know the young king is sick for me. Let us take any man's horses; the laws of England are at my commandment.

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Happy are they which have been my friends;
and woe unto my lord Chief-Justice!

Falstaff and his followers, accompanied by Justice Shallow, ride post-haste to London, and take their stand in a public place near Westminster Abbey, where they may see the young king returning from the coronation ceremonies.

Fal. Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow; I will make the king do you grace: I will leer upon him, as he comes by; and do but mark the countenance that he will give me.

Pist. God bless thy lungs, good knight.

Fal. Come here, Pistol; stand behind me.—O, if I had had time to have made new liveries, I would have bestowed the thousand pound I borrowed of you [*to SHALLOW*]. But 'tis no matter; this poor show doth better: this doth infer the zeal I had to see him,—

Shal. It doth so.

Fal. It shows my earnestness of affection,—

Shal. It doth so.

Fal. My devotion,—

Shal. It doth, it doth, it doth.

But the knight and his retainers are doomed to sad disappointment.

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Enter the KING and his Train, the Chief-Justice among them.

Fal. God save thy grace, King Hal; my royal Hal!

Pist. The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame!

Fal. God save thee, my sweet boy!

King. My lord chief-justice, speak to that vain man.

Ch. Just. Have you your wits? know you what 'tis you speak?

Fal. My king! my Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!

King. I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers.

And the king proceeds with his stern rebuke, admonishing Falstaff to amend his life, and banishing him, on pain of death, not to come within ten miles of the royal person, but promising him an allowance, that lack of means may not force him to evil ways. The king charges the Chief Justice to see the tenor of the royal word performed, and goes on his way, with his train.

Fal. Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound.

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Shal. Yea, marry, Sir John; which I beseech you to let me have home with me.

Fal. That can hardly be, Master Shallow. Do not you grieve at this; I shall be sent for in private to him: look you, he must seem thus to the world: fear not your advancement; I will be the man yet that shall make you great.

Shal. I cannot perceive how,—unless you give me your doublet, and stuff me out with straw. I beseech you, good Sir John, let me have five hundred of my thousand.

Fal. Sir, I will be as good as my word: this that you heard was but a colour.

Shal. A colour, I fear, that you will die in, Sir John.

Fal. Fear no colours: go with me to dinner. Come, Lieutenant Pistol;—come, Bardolph:—I shall be sent for soon at night.

Re-enter PRINCE JOHN, *the* Chief-Justice,
Officers, &c.

Ch. Just. Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet;

Take all his company along with him.

Fal. My lord, my lord,—

Ch. Just. I cannot now speak: I will hear you soon.—

Take them away.

Falstaff's imprisonment may have been brief, but it appears from the first act of the play of

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“King Henry V” that the old knight was greatly broken by his disappointment and the harsh treatment he received from the young king, his quondam boon companion. He is reported very ill of a fever in the Boar’s Head tavern, where Pistol has become host by marriage with the widow Quickly. And the woman exclaims, when they are called to the bedside of the dying Sir John:

The king has killed his heart.

Some time later, Pistol announces to Bardolph and Nym that Falstaff is dead, and that they all “must yearn therefore.”

Bard. Would I were with him, where-some’er he is, either in heaven or in hell!

Host. Nay, sure, he’s not in hell: he’s in Arthur’s bosom, if ever man went to Arthur’s bosom. ‘A made a finer end, and went away, an it had been any christom child; ‘a parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o’ the tide: for after I saw him fumble with the sheets, and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers’ ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and ‘a babbled of green fields. *How now, Sir John!* quoth I: *what, man! be o’ good cheer.* So ‘a cried out — *God, God, God!* three or four

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times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So 'a bade me lay more clothes on his feet: I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone.

The character of Falstaff has been scored very severely by some learned critics as utterly vile, worthless, and contemptible. But it would seem that Shakespeare could not so have regarded it, else Bardolph scarcely would have been made to manifest for his dead patron so profound a regard as that expressed in his brief comment.

We must admit that the corpulent old knight was a very sinful person, a rogue without honour, a drunkard, and a liar. And yet, with all his faults, we are charmed by his infinite wit and gaiety of spirit, and his unfailing good humour and cheerfulness.

KING HENRY V

After the death of Falstaff, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol join the British army in France. The first scene of the third act of "King Henry V" finds them outside the walls of the city of Harfleur, where an active siege is in progress. They are attended by the keen-witted boy who was page to their former master.

Bardolph cries, "On, on to the breach," but Nym says, "Pray thee, corporal, stay; the knocks are too hot," and Pistol chimes in with a like sentiment, while the lad expresses the wish that he were again in London. "I would give all my fame," he declares, "for a pot of ale and safety," which is just what Falstaff might have said in a like situation.

Then enters Captain Fluellen, a Welsh officer of King Henry's forces, and drives the laggards forward, crying:

Up to the preach, you dogs! avaunt, you cullions!

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The boy alone remains, and thus characterises the erstwhile followers of Sir John:

As young as I am, I have observed these three swashers. I am boy to them all three: but all they three, though they would serve me, could not be man to me; for, indeed, three such antics do not amount to a man. For Bardolph, — he is white-livered and red-faced; by the means whereof 'a faces it out, but fights not. For Pistol,— he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword; by the means whereof 'a breaks words and keeps whole weapons. For Nym, — he hath heard that men of few words are the best men; and therefore he scorns to say his prayers lest 'a should be thought a coward: but his few bad words are matched with as few good deeds; for 'a never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk. They will steal anything, and call it purchase. Bardolph stole a lute-case, bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three halfpence. Nym and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching; and in Calais they stole a fire-shovel: I knew by that piece of service the men would carry coals. They would have me as familiar with men's pockets as their gloves or their handkerchers: which makes much against my manhood, if I should take from another's pocket to put into mine; for it is plain pocketing up of wrongs. I must leave them,

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and seek some better service: their villainy goes against my weak stomach, and therefore I must cast it up. [*Exit.*]

The scene shifts to the British camp in Picardy, where the simple-minded, credulous Fluellen commends to the Welsh commander, Gower, the "gallant service," of "Ancient Pistol" "at the pridge," and likens him to Mark Antony in valour. Pistol enters and implores pardon for Bardolph, in these words:

Fortune is Bardolph's foe, and frowns on him;
For he hath stol'n a pax, and hanged must 'a
be,—

A damned death!

Let gallows gap for dog; let man go free,
And let no hemp his windpipe suffocate:
But Exeter hath given the doom of death
For pax of little price.

Therefore, go speak,—the duke will hear thy
voice;

And let not Bardolph's vital thread be cut
With edge of penny cord and vile reproach:
Speak, captain, for his life, and I will thee re-
quite.

Flu. Auncient Pistol, I do partly understand your meaning.

Pist. Why, then, rejoice therefore.

Flu. Certainly, Auncient, it is not a thing to

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rejoice at: for if, look you, he were my prother I would desire the duke to use his goot pleasure, and put him to execution; for discipline ought to be used.

Pist. Die and be damn'd! and fico for thy friendship!

.

[*Exit* PISTOL.]

Gow. Why, this is an arrant counterfeit rascal; I remember him now; . . .

Flu. I'll assure you, 'a uttered as prave 'ords at the pridge as you shall see in a summer's day. . . .

Gow. Why, 'tis a gull, a fool, a rogue, that now and then goes to the wars, to grace himself, at his return into London, under the form of a soldier. And such fellows are perfect in the great commanders' names: and they will learn you by rote where services were done; — at such and such a sponce, at such a breach, at such a convoy; who came off bravely, who was shot, who disgraced, what terms the enemy stood on; and this they con perfectly in the phrase of war, which they trick up with new-tuned oaths: and what a beard of the general's cut, and a horrid suit of the camp, will do among foaming bottles and ale-washed wits, is wonderful to be thought on. But you must learn to know such slanders of the age, or else you may be marvellously mistook.

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Later, on the battlefield, Pistol, attended by the boy, captures a French soldier and threatens to cut his throat unless given, in his ridiculously bombastic phrase, "egregious ransom." The boy interprets the Frenchman's promise to pay two hundred crowns, and Pistol says:

Tell him my fury shall abate, and I
The crowns will take.

Pistol goes out, followed by his prisoner, and the boy comments:

I did never know so full a voice issue from so empty a heart: but the saying is true,—the empty vessel makes the greatest sound. Bardolph and Nym had ten times more valour than this roaring devil i' the old play, that every one may pare his nails with a wooden dagger; and they are both hanged; and so would this be if he durst steal anything adventurously. I must stay with the lackeys, with the luggage of our camp: the French might have a good prey of us if he knew of it; for there is none to guard it but boys. [Exit.

In a subsequent scene, Fluellen denounces Pistol as "a peggary, pragging knave," cudgels him soundly, despite his threats of vengeance,

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and compels him to eat a leek and to accept a groat "to heal his pate."

"I take thy groat in earnest of vengeance," says the swaggering coward, and, after the Welshman departs, he exclaims:

All hell shall stir for this!

But presently, crestfallen after some contemptuous words from Gower, who saw him forced to eat the leek, Pistol soliloquises:

News have I that my Nell is dead . . .
And there my rendezvous is quite cut off.
Old do I wax, and from my weary limbs
Honour is cudged. . . .
To England will I steal, and there I'll steal:
And patches will I get unto these scars,
And swear I got them in the Gallia wars.

And with these words the fantastic knave makes his final exit from the stage.

The play of "King Henry V" is much enlivened by the young king's wooing of Princess Katherine of France, who speaks but little English. He addresses her in semi-humorous fashion, thus:

. . . I' faith, Kate, my wooing is fit for thy understanding: I am glad thou canst speak no

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better English; for if thou couldst, thou wouldst find me such a plain king that thou wouldst think I had sold my farm to buy my crown. I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say I love you: then, if you urge me further than to say, Do you in faith? I wear out my suit. Give me your answer; i' faith, do; and so clap hands and a bargain: how say you, lady?

Kath. *Sauf votre honneur*, me understand vell.

K. Hen. Marry, if you would put me to verses or to dance for your sake, Kate, why you undid me: for the one I have neither words nor measure, and for the other I have no strength in measure, yet a reasonable measure in strength. If I could win a lady at leap-frog, or by vaulting into my saddle with my armour on my back, under the correction of bragging be it spoken, I should quickly leap into a wife. Or if I might buffet for my love, or bound my horse for her favours, I could lay on like a butcher, and sit like a jack-a-napes, never off. But, before God, Kate, I cannot look greenly, nor gasp out my eloquence, nor I have cunning in protestation; only downright oaths, which I never use till urged, nor never break for urging. If thou canst love a fellow of this temper, Kate, whose face is not worth sun-burning, that never looks in his glass for love of anything he sees there, let thine eye be thy cook.

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I speak to thee plain soldier: if thou canst love me for this, take me; if not, to say to thee that I shall die is true,—but for thy love, by the Lord, no; yet I love thee too. And while thou livest, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy; for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places: for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours, they do always reason themselves out again. What! a speaker is but a prater: a rhyme is but a ballad. A good leg will fall; a straight back will stoop; a black beard will turn white; a curled pate will grow bald; a fair face will wither; a full eye will wax hollow: but a good heart, Kate, is the sun and the moon; or, rather, the sun, and not the moon,—for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly. If thou would have such a one, take me: and take me, take a soldier; take a soldier, take a king: and what sayest thou, then, to my love? speak, my fair, and fairly, I pray thee.

Kath. Is it possible dat I should love de enemy of France?

K. Hen. No; it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate: but in loving me you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine: and, Kate,

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when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine.

Kath. I cannot tell vat is dat.

K. Hen. No, Kate? I will tell thee in French; which I am sure will hang upon my tongue like a new-married wife about her husband's neck, hardly to be shook off.

· · · · ·
Come, your answer in broken music,— for thy voice is music and thy English broken; therefore, queen of all, Katharine, break thy mind to me in broken English,— wilt thou have me?

Kath. Dat is as it sall please de *roi mon père*.

K. Hen. Nay, it will please him well, Kate, — it shall please him, Kate.

Kath. Den it sall also content me.

K. Hen. Upon that I kiss your hand, and I call you my queen.

She tells him in French that she does not wish him so to descend from his greatness as to kiss her hand, to which he replies:

Then I will kiss your lips, Kate.

To this she also objects, saying it is not the custom of France for maids to kiss before they are married. This being interpreted to him, he responds:

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O Kate, nice customs court'sy to great kings. Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak list of a country's fashion: we are the makers of manners, Kate; and the liberty that follows our places stops the mouth of all find-faults,— as I will do yours for upholding the nice fashion of your country in denying me a kiss: therefore, patiently and yielding. [*Kissing her.*] You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate: there is more eloquence in a sugar touch of them than in the tongues of the French council; and they should sooner persuade Harry of England than a general petition of monarchs.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

There is a tradition that Queen Elizabeth was so much pleased with the wit of Falstaff, in the play of "King Henry IV," that she directed Shakespeare to write another, in which the merry knight should be exhibited in a love affair. And the story goes that she was so eager to see the new piece that she ordered it to be completed within twelve days. Whether this was the origin of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" may be doubtful, but it appears from internal evidence that the play was hastily written. It is a play of intrigue, in which Falstaff pays court, at one and the same time, to Mistresses Ford and Page, married women of Windsor, of high respectability and social standing.

These merry wives are close friends, and, literally by comparing notes from Sir John, to their intense amusement, they discover his duplicity, for he had written to each of them precisely the same professions of love. They then put their

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heads together to invent a scheme for his discomfiture. Falstaff is lured by a message to visit Mistress Ford one morning at an appointed hour, but soon after his arrival an alarm is given by Mistress Page, who says that Ford, who is very jealous, is coming, with officers, to search for the knight. Upon the suggestion of Mistress Page, Falstaff squeezes himself into a "buck-basket," used for the conveyance of the soiled linen of the household to a laundering-place, and the two women cover him with such linen. As Ford enters, two serving-men bear out Falstaff in the basket. Let the adventurous knight relate the experience, as some time later he communes with himself at the Garter Inn, after ordering Bardolph to bring him a quart of sack, with a toast in it:

Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal; and to be thrown into the Thames? Well, if I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i' the litter: and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were

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as deep as hell I should down. I had been drowned but that the shore was shelvy and shallow: a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing I should have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

A little later Falstaff tells the jealous Ford, who has gained his confidence under the fictitious name of Brook (with the idea of revenging himself upon the knight and discovering what he believes to be his wife's misconduct), these further particulars of the misadventure:

Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were called forth by their mistress to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane: they took me on their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the door; who asked them once or twice what they had in their basket: I quaked for fear lest the lunatic knave would have searched it. . . . Well: on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, Master Brook; I suffered the pangs of three several deaths: first, an intolerable fright to be detected with a jealous rotten bell-wether: next, to be compassed, like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head: and then, to be stopped in,

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like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease: think of that, — a man of my kidney,— think of that: that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw; it was a miracle to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half-stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse-shoe; think of that,— hissing hot, — think of that, Master Brook.

Falstaff is beguiled into paying Mistress Ford another visit, and is again surprised by the return of her husband. In order to escape discovery, the knight is induced to don a gown and bonnet belonging to “the fat woman of Brentwood,” whom Ford regards as a witch and cannot abide. When Falstaff, thus disguised, is leaving the house, he encounters Ford, who beats him soundly with a cudgel, mistaking him for the old woman. Later, Falstaff thus ruminates over this second misadventure:

I would all the world might be cozened; for I have been cozened and beaten too. If it should come to the ear of the court how I have been transformed, and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgelled, they would

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melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with me; I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I never prospered since I foreswore myself at *primero*. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.—

Despite these mishaps, Falstaff is deluded by the two fun-loving women into entering a third trap. He is induced to meet them at night in Windsor Park, disguised as Herne the hunter, with a buck's head and horns. There, as the pair had planned, a party of children, dressed like fairies, with lighted tapers in their hands, surround him. Believing them to be fairies, and that "he that speaks to them shall die," Falstaff lies down upon his face. They pinch him, and burn his fingers with the tapers. Then Ford, Page, and others, as planned by the merry wives, appear, and the old knight is made the target of their jests and raillery, to his exceeding mortification. But at the close of the scene Sir John is invited to accompany them all to the home of the Pages, to laugh over the sport, "by a country fire."

The play of "The Merry Wives" is some-

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what farcical, and affords entertainment even more by the humour of its succession of ingeniously contrived situations, and its diverting incidents, than by its dialogue. In its opening part Justice Shallow and Slender, who figure in the earlier play of "King Henry IV," appear with Sir Hugh Evans before Page's house, and the following amusing colloquy ensues.

Shal. Sir Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star-chamber matter of it; if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

Slen. In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *coram*.

Shal. Ay, cousin Slender, and *Custalorum*.

Slen. Ay, and *Ratolorum* too; and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself *Armigero*; in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation,—*Armigero!*

Shal. Ay, that we do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slen. All his successors, gone before him, have done't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white lues in their coat.

Shal. The Council shall hear it; it is a riot.

Eva. It is not meet the Council hear a riot;

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there is no fear of Got in a riot; the Council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments in that.

Shal. Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

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Enter Sir JOHN FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, NYM, and PISTOL.

Fal. Now, Master Shallow; you'll complain of me to the king?

Shal. Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my lodge.

Fal. But not kissed your keeper's daughter?

Shal. Tut, a pin! this shall be answered.

Fal. I will answer it straight;—I have done all this:—That is now answered.

Shal. The Council shall know this.

Fal. 'Twere better for you if it were known in counsel: you'll be laughed at.

Eva. *Pauca verba*, Sir John, goot worts.

Fal. Good worts! good cabbage.—Slender, I broke your head; what matter have you against me?

Slen. Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you; and against your coney-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol. They

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carried me to the tavern, and made me drunk, and afterwards picked my pocket.

In a later scene Sir John discharges Pistol and Nym because of their refusal to bear his amorous notes to the merry wives. The two worthies then plot to revenge themselves by betraying his schemes to Masters Ford and Page, which they proceed to do, thus laying the foundation for Falstaff's subsequent mishaps and chagrin.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The plot of "Much Ado About Nothing," with the exception of the comic portion relative to Benedick and Beatrice, seems to have been derived from an old Italian novel by Bandello, in which the chief incidents, and even the names of some of the characters, are the same.

The play opens with an announcement by Leonato, Governor of Messina, to his daughter, Hero, and his niece, Beatrice, that Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, from whom a messenger has just brought a letter, is coming to Messina. There has been a military action, in which a young Florentine noble named Claudio won much favour with the prince. Also in the prince's train is Benedick, a young nobleman of Padua, and concerning him Beatrice makes satirical inquiry of the messenger.

Beatrice. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for, indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing.

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Leon. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath help to eat it: he is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady: but what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed: he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing,—well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet but there is a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the old man governed with one: so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature.—Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is it possible?

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Beat. Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No: an he were I would burn my study. . . .

Don Pedro enters, attended by his brother Don Juan, Claudio, Benedick, and others. The prince is welcomed by Leonato, and a play of wit begins between Beatrice and Benedick.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick; nobody marks you.

Bene. What, my dear lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turn-coat.— But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart: for, truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God, and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my

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dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way o God's name; I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old.

After Leonato and the ladies go out, Claudio confesses to Benedick and Don Pedro that he is in love with Hero. Benedick declares her cousin, Beatrice, "exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December," but proceeds to scoff at marriage, vowing that he will always remain a bachelor.

When Benedick leaves them, it is arranged between Don Pedro and Claudio that at the revels to come in the evening the prince, in some disguise, shall tell Hero he is Claudio, and make love to her in his behalf. The prince is overheard and misunderstood by a servant, and

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word is brought to Leonato that Don Pedro is in love with Hero and means to acknowledge it to her immediately. In a later scene, for Leonato, Hero and Beatrice, the following colloquy occurs :

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be over-mastered with a piece of valiant dust! to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in everything, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly modest as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

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Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.

Don Pedro later tells Claudio that he has wooed and won Hero in Claudio's name, and obtained her father's consent. And Beatrice jesting over the matter, says:

I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho! for a husband.

D. Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days; your grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your grace, pardon me; I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

D. Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

A merry plot is then contrived by Don Pedro, to bring about a match between Benedick and

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Beatrice; that he shall be made to believe she is very much in love with him, despite her railery, and that she be played upon in like fashion, to be persuaded that Benedick is deeply enamoured of her. The scheme is first applied in a garden, where Benedick soliloquises, thus:

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love. And such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turned orthographer; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn but Love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair; yet I am well: another is wise; yet I am well: another virtuous; yet I am well:

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but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.
[*Withdraws.*]

Don Pedro, Claudio ("Monsieur Love"),
Leonato and Balthazar enter. Balthazar sings:

I.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more;
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never;
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into, Hey, nonny, nonny.

II.

Sing no more ditties, sing no mo
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The fraud of men was ever so
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so, &c.

The singer departs, and the others proceed with their sport of beguiling Benedick, having noted his hiding in the arbour.

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D. Pedro. Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me to-day,—that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud. . . . I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Bene. Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner? [*Aside.*

They go on in the same fashion, making it appear to Benedick that Beatrice is wildly in love with him but too proud to disclose to him her passion. They then go out, having arranged to cause a like net to be spread for Beatrice, and to have her call him to dinner.

BENEDICK advances from the arbour.

Bene. This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne.—They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady; it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her; they say, too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection.—I did never think to

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marry — I must not seem proud.— Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous — 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me.— By my troth, it is no addition to her wit; — nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. — I may chance have some old quirks and remnants of wit broken on me because I have railed so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips, and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No: the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor I did not think I should live till I were married.— Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter BEATRICE.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful I would not have come.

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If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antic,
Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agate very vilely cut:
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out.

Beatrice, in concealment, takes the bait greedily, and when they have retired she advances and owns to herself, aloud, her intention to requite Benedick's love, taming her "wild heart" to his "loving hand."

In a subsequent scene Don Pedro, Claudio and Leonato amuse themselves with Benedick by discussing the question whether he is in love, and he makes a partial admission, remarking:

Gallants, I am not as I have been.

.

Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it.

They continue to jest at his expense:

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman there is no believing old signs: he brushes his hat o' mornings: what should that bode?

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

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Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him; and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D. Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civet. Can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say the sweet youth's in love.

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

D. Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into a lute-string, and now governed by stops.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him: conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Don John, out of malice and envy toward Claudio, sets in operation a wicked plot, contrived by his follower, Borachio, to defeat the approaching marriage of Hero. Borachio is in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero, and it is arranged that in the absence of Hero from her chamber, on the evening before the wedding, Margaret shall take

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Hero's place, admit Borachio, and answer to the name of her mistress.

This scheme being fully arranged, Don John denounces Hero as disloyal, before Don Pedro and Claudio, and offers to prove the charge by showing them her chamber window entered. Claudio becomes distrustful, and declares that if he should see reason why he should not marry he would shame her before the whole congregation gathered to witness the wedding on the morrow. And Don Pedro says he will join with Claudio to disgrace her, should there be cause.

The next scene in the conspiracy introduces Dogberry, one of the most amusing of all Shakespeare's comic rôles. Although destitute of either wit or humour, and the very personification of dulness, pretentious ignorance and stupidity — in short, a solemn ass — this constable is a source of infinite diversion to the discriminating reader, and has furnished the stage one of its most noted and most popular characters. His blundering misuse of words, in his efforts to impress his hearers with his wisdom and learning, his egregious vanity and conceit, his fatuous reasoning and his pride of

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office and authority — even his very tediousness — unite to make a personage whose very name excites a smile. The dramatist's marvellous powers of characterisation are strikingly exhibited in this remarkable creation. There is nothing equal to Dogberry in this kind, but Constable Elbow, in "Measure for Measure," is of the same or a similar type.

The scene is a street by night. Enter Dogberry and Verges, with the men composing the watch.

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desertless man to be constable?

1 Watch. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal: God hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune: but to write and read comes by nature.

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2 *Watch.* Both which, master constable,—

Dogb. You have; I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge;—you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

2 *Watch.* How if 'a will not stand?

Dogb. Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects.—You shall also make no noise in the streets; for for the watch to babble and talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

2 *Watch.* We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills be not stolen.—Well, you are to call

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at all the ale-houses, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

2 Watch. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why, then, let them alone till they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

2 Watch. Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man: and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is your honesty.

2 Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will; much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

2 Watch. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why, then, depart in peace, and let

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the child wake her with crying: for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baas will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge. You, constable, are to present the prince's own person; if you meet the prince in the night you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by'r lady, that I think 'a cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statues, he may stay him: marry, not without the prince be willing: for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By'r lady, I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ha, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night.— Come, neighbour.

2 Watch. Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours: I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu, be vigilant, I beseech you.

Dogberry and Verges go their ways, and Borachio and Conrade come on the scene. The

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dialogue is aptly suggestive of darkness, the better to indicate that the watchmen may overhear the two villains without being seen.

Bora. What, Conrade! —

Watch. Peace, stir not. [Aside.

Bora. Conrade, I say!

Con. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass, and my elbow itched; I thought there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this penthouse, for it drizzles rain; and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. [Aside.] Some treason, masters; yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

Bora. Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villainy should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

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Bora. I mean the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. I know that Deformed; 'a has been a vile thief this seven year; 'a goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No; 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily he turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting; sometimes like god Bel's priests in the old church window; sometimes like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry. . . .

Con. All this I see; and see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so neither; but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero; she leans me out at her mistress's chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vilely:—I should first tell thee, how the

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prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made away went Claudio enraged, swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw over-night, and send her home again without a husband.

1 Watch. We charge you in the prince's name, stand.

2 Watch. Call up the right master constable: we have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

1 Watch. And one Deformed is one of them; I know him, 'a wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters!

2 Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters,—

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I Watch. Never speak; we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you. [*Exeunt.*]

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A Room in LEONATO'S House. Enter LEONATO, with DOGBERRY and VERGES.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for you see 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honestier than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous: *palabras*, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

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Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers: but, truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me! ha!

Dogb. Yea, and 'twere a thousand times more than 'tis: for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, have ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, sir; he will be talking; as they say, When the age is in the wit is out; God help us! it is a world to see!— Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges:— well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind.— An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread: but God is to be worshipped. All men are not alike,— alas, good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

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Dogb. One word, sir: our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me; I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Dogb. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal; bid him bring his pen and ink-horn to the gaol: we are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you; here's that [*touching his forehead*] shall drive some of them to a *non com*: only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol.

A prison scene ensues, with Dogberry, Verges and Sexton in gowns, and the watch, with Conrade and Borachio, prisoners.

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appeared?

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton!

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner:

Verg. Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.

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Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me.—What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray write down — Borachio.— Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogb. Write down — master gentleman Conrade.— Masters, do you serve God?

Con. }
Bora. } Yea, sir, we hope.

Dogb. Write down — that they hope they serve God: — and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains! — Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him.— Come you hither, sirrah: a word in your ears, sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside.—'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down — that they are none?

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Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine; you must call forth the Watch that are their accusers.

Dogb. Yea, marry, that's the efastest way.— Let the Watch come forth.— Masters, I charge you in the prince's name, accuse these men.

1 Watch. This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb. Write down— Prince John a villain.— Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master constable,—

Dogb. Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

2 Watch. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats off Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by the mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

1 Watch. And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2 Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than

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you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died.—Master constable, let these men be bound and brought to Leonato's; I will go before and show him their examination. [Exit.

Dogb. Come, let them be opinioned.

Verg. Let them be in band.

Con. Off, coxcomb!

Dogb. God's my life! where's the sexton? let him write down — the prince's officer, coxcomb.— Come, bind them.— Thou naughty varlet!

Con. Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? — O that he were here to write me down an ass! but, masters, remember, that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass.— No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina: and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and everything handsome about him.

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— Bring him away. O that I had been writ
down an ass! [*Exeunt.*

At the altar, when the marriage ceremony to unite Hero and Claudio has begun, and the friar asks if there be any impediment, Claudio denounces her as unchaste. And Don Pedro relates that he, his brother John and Claudio had seen her talk with a ruffian at her chamber window, who had since confessed to a long course of infamous intimacy with her.

At this recital Hero falls in a swoon, and her father, believing her guilty, cries shame upon her. Claudio's charges are confirmed by Don John as well as Don Pedro, and the three leave the church.

The friar pleads for Hero with her father, declaring his belief in her innocence, and suggesting that she be kept in seclusion until it can be established, meanwhile giving out that she is dead and has been privately buried. This course is followed.

Beatrice, convinced that her cousin has been slandered, avows to Benedick her love for him, and persuades him to challenge Claudio, which he does. While Don Pedro and Claudio are discussing the matter, come Dogberry, Verges

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and the watch, with Conrade and Borachio. Don Pedro recognises the prisoners and asks what offences they have done. Dogberry answers:

Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they 'are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things: and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

The prince, remarking that "this learned constable is too cunning to be understood," asks the prisoners the cause of their arrest. Borachio makes a full confession of the deception he had practised at the instance of Don John, and tells how the watchmen had overheard the narration of it to Conrade. Dogberry then says:

Come, bring away the plaintiffs; by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter: and, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Leonato enters, and, Borachio's confession being made known to him, the princes implore his pardon. Leonato prays them to make

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known to all Messina that his daughter died innocent, and says his brother Antonio has a daughter almost a copy of Hero, and that if Claudio will marry her it will make amends. To this Claudio consents.

Dogb. Moreover, sir,— which, indeed, is not under white and black,— this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment. And also, the Watch heard them talk of one Deformed: they say he wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name; the which he hath used so long, and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake: pray you, examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth, and I praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation!

Leon. Go; I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your worship; which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your worship; I wish your worship well;

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God restore you to health; I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it.— Come, neighbour.

Following this scene there is a little encounter of wit between Beatrice and Benedick, in which these passages occur:

Beat. . . . There's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbours: if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question:— why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum: therefore it is most expedient for the wise (if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary) to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself.

.
Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. No, no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio

Have been deceived; for they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

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Bene. No, no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula,

Are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter.— Then you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon 't that he loves her;

For here's a paper written in his hand —
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! — here's our own hands against our hearts! — Come, I will have thee; but, by this light I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you; — but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

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Bene. Peace; I will stop your mouth.

D. Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick the married man? [*Kissing her.*]

Bene. I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire, or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion.

The closing scene of the play is a room in Leonato's house, where Claudio comes prepared to fulfil his promise to marry the daughter of Antonio, and joys to find her the real Hero. So they are wed, and also Beatrice and Benedick.

The resemblance between Dogberry and Constable Elbow in their misuse of words is indicated by the following extract from "Measure for Measure." Elbow comes before Duke Angelo with certain persons under arrest.

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Ang. How now, sir! What's your name?
and what's the matter?

Elb. If it please your honour, I am the
poor duke's constable, and my name is Elbow;
I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here
before your good honour two notorious benefactors.

Ang. Benefactors! Well; what benefactors
are they? are they not malefactors?

Elb. If it please your honour, I know not
well what they are: but precise villains they
are, that I am sure of; and void of all profana-
tion in the world that good Christians ought to
have.

AS YOU LIKE IT

One of the most sparkling of Skakespeare's comedies is "As You Like It," which abounds in lively wit and delightful poetic fancy. Much of its dialogue is of the most animated sort. In *Rosalind* the poet created one of the most charming of all his female characters. Her jests and raillery flow from a seemingly inexhaustible fount of gaiety and sprightly repartee, and yet at heart she is tender and romantic.

Contrasted with the effervescent mirth of this fascinating heroine is the cynical wit and philosophy of "the melancholy Jaques" and the quizzical humour of *Touchstone*, the court fool.

Romantic love is the motive of most of the action, but it is treated in a light and airy way, and made the theme of much merriment. There is little plot. The principal scenes are laid in the forest of *Arden*, to which the rightful Duke, banished by Frederick, his usurping younger brother, has retired, accompanied by his devoted adherents. His daugh-

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ter Rosalind has been suffered to remain at the court of Frederick because of her attachment for Celia, the usurper's daughter, but is in turn banished, without cause and on pain of death. Rosalind dons man's attire, the better to avoid molestation on her journey, and repairs to the forest of Arden, accompanied by the devoted Celia and the faithful Touchstone. Arrived at their destination, they enter upon a pastoral life.

Orlando, son of Sir Roland de Bois, is cruelly and unjustly treated by his elder brother Oliver, and deprived of his inheritance. Prior to the exile of Rosalind, Orlando engages in a wrestling match before Duke Frederick, and defeats Charles, the Duke's wrestler, whom Oliver secretly had prompted to maim or kill Orlando. There is love at first sight between Orlando and Rosalind, who with Celia views the wrestling and encourages him to do his best, after her entreaties have failed to dissuade him from the venture. After his victory she gives him a chain from her neck and says to him:

Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown
More than your enemies.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Orlando, dumb with passion, fails to respond, which gives point to this subsequent dialogue:

Cel. Why, cousin; why, Rosalind; — Cupid have mercy! — Not a word?

Ros. Not one to throw at a dog.

Cel. No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs, throw some of them at me; come, lame me with reasons.

Ros. Then there were two cousins laid up; when the one should be lamed with reasons and the other mad without any.

Cel. But is all this for your father?

Ros. No, some of it is for my father's child. O, how full of briers is this working-day world!

Cel. They are but burs, cousin, thrown upon thee in holiday foolery; if we walk not in the trodden paths our very petticoats will catch them.

Ros. I could shake them off my coat: these burs are in my heart.

Cel. Hem them away.

Ros. I would try, if I could cry hem and have him.

Cel. Come, come, wrestle with thy affections.

Ros. O, they take the part of a better wrestler than myself.

Cel. O, a good wish upon you! you will try in time, in despite of a fall. . . .

SHAKESPEARE'S

After the wrestling, Orlando returns to his brother's house, but is warned by Adam, an aged servitor, not to venture in, as Oliver means to kill him. The faithful Adam gives him 500 crowns, which is all his store, and together they set out to "light upon some settled low content." They reach the forest of Arden, spent with hunger and fatigue, and are given succour by the banished Duke and his companions.

Meanwhile Rosalind, in masculine garb, and Celia, dressed like a shepherdess, with Touchstone, have entered the forest and are greatly tired.

Ros. O Jupiter! how weary are my spirits!

Touch. I care not for my spirits if my legs were not weary.

Ros. I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel, and to cry like a woman: but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat: therefore, courage, good Aliena.

Cel. I pray you, bear with me; I can go no farther.

Touch. For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you: yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you; for, I think, you have no money in your purse.

WIT AND HUMOUR

To them come Corin and Silvius, shepherds, and the princesses arrange with Corin for the purchase of a cottage, pasture and sheep, retaining him in their service.

Another part of the Forest.

Enter AMIENS, JAQUES, and others of the banished Duke's train.

SONG.

Ami. Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

Jaq. More, more, I pr'ythee, more.

Ami. It will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jaques.

Jaq. I thank it. More, I pr'ythee, more.
I can suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel
sucks eggs. More, I pr'ythee, more.

SONG.

Who doth ambition shun, [*All together here.*]
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

SHAKESPEARE'S

Jaq. I'll give you a verse to this note, that
I made yesterday in despite of my invention.

Ami. And I'll sing it.

Jaq. Thus it goes :

If it do come to pass
That any man turn ass,
Leaving his wealth and ease
A stubborn will to please,
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame;
Here shall he see
Gross fools as he,
An if he will come to Ami.

Ami. What's that *ducdame*?

Jaq. 'Tis a Greek invocation, to call fools
into a circle.

The scene changes to another part of the forest, where a table is set with food. The banished duke, Amiens and others appear, and as Jaques enters the duke accosts him :

Duke S. Why, how now, monsieur! what a
life is this,
That your poor friends must woo your com-
pany?
What! you look merrily.

Jaq. A fool, a fool! — I met a fool i' the
forest,
A motley fool; — a miserable world! —
As I do live by food, I met a fool,
Who laid him down and bask'd him in the sun,

And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms,
 In good set terms,— and yet a motley fool.
*Good-morrow, fool, quoth I: No, sir, quoth he,
 Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me for-
 tune.*

And then he drew a dial from his poke,
 And, looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
 Says very wisely, *It is ten o'clock:*
*Thus may we see, quoth he, how the world
 wags.*

*'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;
 And after one hour more 'twill be eleven;
 And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
 And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
 And thereby hangs a tale.* When I did hear
 The motley fool thus moral on the time,
 My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,
 That fools should be so deep contemplative;
 And I did laugh, sans intermission,
 An hour by his dial.— O noble fool!
 A worthy fool! — Motley's the only wear.

Duke S. What fool is this?

Jaq. O worthy fool! — One that hath been
 a courtier,
 And says, if ladies be but young and fair,
 They have the gift to know it: and in his
 brain,—
 Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
 After a voyage,— he hath strange places
 cramm'd

SHAKESPEARE'S

With observation, the which he vents
In mangled forms.— O that I were a fool!
I am ambitious for a motley coat.

.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms;
Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the
justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,

WIT AND HUMOUR

That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion;
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

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Another part of the Forest.

Enter CORIN and TOUCHSTONE.

Cor. And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?

Touch. Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humour well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

Cor. No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means, and content, is without three good friends; that the property of rain is to wet, and fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep; and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun; that he that hath learned no wit by nature nor art may complain of good breeding, or comes of a very dull kindred.

SHAKESPEARE'S

Touch. Such a one is a natural philosopher.
Wast ever in court, shepherd?

Cor. No, truly.

Touch. Then thou art damned.

Cor. Nay, I hope,—

Touch. Truly, thou art damned; like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.

Cor. For not being at court? Your reason.

Touch. Why, if thou never wast at court thou never saw'st good manners; if thou never saw'st good manners, then thy manners must be wicked; and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

Cor. Not a whit, Touchstone: those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court, but you kiss your hands; that courtesy would be uncleanly if courtiers were shepherds.

Rosalind enters, reading verses in her praise, written upon a paper by Orlando, which she had found on a tree. After her comes Celia, also reading verses to Rosalind, and they converse, Corin and Touchstone retiring:

Cel. Didst thou hear these verses?

Ros. O yes, I heard them all, and more too; for some of them had in them more feet than the verses would bear.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Cel. That's no matter; the feet might bear the verses.

Ros. Ay, but the feet were lame, and could not bear themselves without the verse, and therefore stood lamely in the verse.

Cel. But didst thou hear without wondering how thy name should be hanged and carved upon these trees?

Ros. I was seven of the nine days out of the wonder before you came; for look here what I found on a palm tree: I was never so be-rhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember.

Cel. Trow you who hath done this?

Ros. Is it a man?

Cel. And a chain, that you once wore, about his neck. Change you colour?

Ros. I pray thee, who?

Cel. O lord, lord! it is a hard matter for friends to meet; but mountains may be removed with earthquakes, and so encounter.

Ros. Nay, but who is it?

Cel. Is it possible?

Ros. Nay, I pr'ythee now, with most petitionary vehemence, tell me who it is.

Cel. O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful! and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all whooping!

Ros. Good my complexion! dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a

SHAKESPEARE'S

doublet and hose in my disposition? One inch of delay more is a South-sea of discovery. I pr'ythee, tell me, who is it? quickly, and speak apace. I would thou couldst stammer, that thou mightst pour this concealed man out of thy mouth, as wine comes out of a narrow-mouthed bottle; either too much at once or none at all. I pr'ythee take the cork out of thy mouth, that I may drink thy tidings.

Is he of God's making? What manner of man? Is his head worth a hat or his chin worth a beard?

Cel. Nay, he hath but a little beard.

Ros. Why, God will send more if the man will be thankful: let me stay the growth of his beard if thou delay me not the knowledge of his chin.

Cel. It is young Orlando, that tripped up the wrestler's heels and your heart both in an instant.

Ros. Nay, but the devil take mocking: speak sad brow and true maid.

Cel. I' faith, coz, 'tis he.

Ros. Orlando?

Cel. Orlando.

Ros. Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose? — What did he when thou saw'st him? What said he? How look'd he? Wherein went he? What makes he here?

WIT AND HUMOUR

Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? and when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.

Cel. You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first: 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism.

Ros. But doth he know that I am in this forest, and in man's apparel? Looks he as freshly as he did the day he wrestled?

Cel. It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover: — but take a taste of my finding him, and relish it with good observance. I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn.

Ros. It may well be called Jove's tree, when it drops forth such fruit.

Cel. Give me audience, good madam.

Ros. Proceed.

Cel. There lay he, stretched along like a wounded knight.

Ros. Though it be pity to see such a sight, it well becomes the ground.

Cel. Cry, holla! to thy tongue, I pr'ythee; it curvets unseasonably. He was furnished like a hunter.

Ros. O, ominous! he comes to kill my heart.

Cel. I would sing my song without a burden: thou bring'st me out of tune.

SHAKESPEARE'S

Ros. Do you not know I am a woman?
when I think, I must speak. Sweet, say on.

Cel. You bring me out.—Soft! comes he
not here?

Ros. 'Tis he: slink by, and note him.

[*CELIA and ROSALIND retire.*]

Enter ORLANDO AND JAQUES.

Jaq. I thank you for your company; but,
good faith, I had as lief have been myself alone.

Orl. And so had I; but yet, for fashion's
sake, I thank you too for your society.

Jaq. God be with you: let's meet as little as
we can.

Orl. I do desire we may be better strangers.

Jaq. I pray you, mar no more trees with
writing love-songs in their barks.

Orl. I pray you, mar no more of my verses
with reading them ill-favouredly.

Jaq. Rosalind is your love's name?

Orl. Yes, just.

Jaq. I do not like her name.

Orl. There was no thought of pleasing you
when she was christened.

Jaq. What stature is she of?

Orl. Just as high as my heart.

Jaq. You are full of pretty answers. Have
you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives,
and conned them out of rings?

WIT AND HUMOUR

Orl. Not so; but I answer you right painted cloth, from whence you have studied your questions.

Jaq. You have a nimble wit: I think it was made of Atalanta's heels. Will you sit down with me? and we two will rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery.

Orl. I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.

Jaq. The worst fault you have is to be in love.

Orl. 'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.

Jaq. By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.

Orl. He is drowned in the brook; look but in, and you shall see him.

Jaq. There I shall see mine own figure.

Orl. Which I take to be either a fool or a cipher.

Jaq. I'll tarry no longer with you: farewell, good Signior Love.

Orl. I am glad of your departure: adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy.

[*Exit* JAQ.—*CEL. and ROS. come forward.*]

Ros. I will speak to him like a saucy lacquey, and under that habit play the knave with him.—Do you hear, forester?

Orl. Very well: what would you?

Ros. I pray you, what is 't o'clock?

SHAKESPEARE'S

Orl. You should ask me what time o' day; there's no clock in the forest.

Ros. Then there's no true lover in the forest, else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of time as well as a clock.

Orl. And why not the swift foot of time? had not that been as proper?

Ros. By no means, sir. Time travels in divers paces with divers persons. I will tell you who time ambles withal, who time trots withal, who time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.

Orl. I pr'ythee, who doth he trot withal?

Ros. Marry, he trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized; if the interim be but a se'nnight, time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven years.

Orl. Who ambles time withal?

Ros. With a priest that lacks Latin and a rich man that hath not the gout: for the one sleeps easily, because he cannot study; and the other lives merrily, because he feels no pain; the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning; the other knowing no burden of heavy tedious penury. These time ambles withal.

Orl. Who doth he gallop withal?

Ros. With a thief to the gallows; for

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though he go as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there.

Orl. Who stays it still withal?

Ros. With lawyers in the vacation; for they sleep between term and term, and then they perceive not how time moves.

Orl. Where dwell you, pretty youth?

Ros. With this shepherdess, my sister; here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat.

Orl. Are you native of this place?

Ros. As the coney, that you see dwell where she is kindled.

Orl. Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.

Ros. I have been told so of many; but indeed an old religious uncle of mine taught me to speak, who was in his youth an inland man; one that knew courtship too well, for there he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it; and I thank God I am not a woman, to be touched with so many giddy offences as he hath generally taxed their whole sex withal.

Orl. Can you remember any of the principal evils that he laid to the charge of women?

Ros. There were none principal; they were all like one another as halfpence are; every one fault seeming monstrous till his fellow fault came to match it.

SHAKESPEARE'S

Orl. I pr'ythee, recount some of them.

Ros. No; I will not cast away my physic but on those that are sick. There is a man haunts the forest that abuses our young plants with carving Rosalind on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns, and elegies on brambles; all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind: if I could meet that fancymonger I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the quotidian of love upon him.

Orl. I am he that is so love-shaked: I pray you, tell me your remedy.

Ros. There is none of my uncle's marks upon you: he taught me how to know a man in love; in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner.

Orl. What were his marks?

Ros. A lean cheek; which you have not: a blue eye and sunken; which you have not: an unquestionable spirit; which you have not: a beard neglected; which you have not: but I pardon you for that; for simply your having in beard is a younger brother's revenue:— then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man; you are rather point-device in your accoutrements; as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Orl. Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love.

Ros. Me believe it! you may as soon make her that you love believe it; which, I warrant, she is apter to do than to confess she does: that is one of the points in the which women still give the lie to their consciences. But, in good sooth, are you he that hangs the verses on the trees, wherein Rosalind is so admired?

Orl. I swear to thee, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

Ros. But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?

Orl. Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.

Ros. Love is merely a madness; and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do: and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.

Orl. Did you ever cure any so?

Ros. Yes, one; and in this manner. He was to imagine me his love, his mistress; and I set him every day to woo me: at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing, and liking; proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion

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something, and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour: would now like him, now loath him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a loving humour of madness; which was, to forswear the full stream of the world, and to live in a nook nearly monastic. And thus I cured him; and this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in 't.

Orl. I would not be cured, youth.

Ros. I would cure you if you would but call me Rosalind, and come every day to my cote and woo me.

Orl. Now, by the faith of my love, I will: tell me where it is.

Ros. Go with me to it, and I'll show it you: and, by the way, you shall tell me where in the forest you live. Will you go?

Orl. With all my heart, good youth.

Ros. Nay, you must call me Rosalind.—Come, sister, will you go?

Some time after, Rosalind and Celia discuss Orlando, who has been taking the "cure" recommended by his lady love, who is still masquerading as a youth.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Ros. Never talk to me; I will weep.

Cel. Do, I pr'ythee; but yet have the grace to consider that tears do not become a man.

Ros. But have I not cause to weep?

Cel. As good cause as one would desire; therefore weep.

Ros. His very hair is of the dissembling colour.

Cel. Something browner than Judas's: marry, his kisses are Judas's own children.

Ros. I' faith, his hair is of a good colour.

Cel. An excellent colour: your chestnut was ever the only colour.

Ros. And his kissing is as full of sanctity as the touch of holy bread.

Cel. He hath bought a pair of cast lips of Diana: a nun of winter's sisterhood kisses not more religiously; the very ice of chastity is in them.

Ros. But why did he swear he would come this morning, and comes not?

Cel. Nay, certainly, there is no truth in him.

Ros. Do you think so?

Cel. Yes; I think he is not a pickpurse nor a horse-stealer; but for his verity in love, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet or a worm-eaten nut.

Ros. Not true in love?

Cel. Yes, when he is in; but I think he is not in.

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Ros. You have heard him swear downright he was.

Cel. *Was* is not *is*: besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster; they are both the confirmers of false reckonings. He attends here in the forest on the duke, your father.

Ros. I met the duke yesterday, and had much question with him. He asked me of what parentage I was; I told him, of as good as he; so he laughed and let me go. But what talk we of fathers when there is such a man as Orlando?

Cel. O, that's a brave man! he writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths, and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover; as a puny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose: but all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides.

A later scene in the forest brings the disguised Rosalind, Celia and Jaques into converse.

Jaq. I pr'ythee, pretty youth, let me be better acquainted with thee.

Ros. They say you are a melancholy fellow.

Jaq. I am so; I do love it better than laughing.

Ros. Those that are in extremity of either

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are abominable fellows, and betray themselves to every modern censure worse than drunkards.

Jaq. Why, 'tis good to be sad and say nothing.

Ros. Why, then, 'tis good to be a post.

Jaq. I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects: and, indeed, the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humourous sadness.

Ros. A traveller! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad: I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's; then, to have seen much, and to have nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

Jaq. Yes, I have gained my experience.

Ros. And your experience makes you sad: I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad; and to travel for it too.

Enter ORLANDO.

Orl. Good day, and happiness, dear Rosalind!

SHAKESPEARE'S

Jaq. Nay, then, God be wi' you, an you talk in blank verse.

Ros. Farewell, monsieur traveller: look you lisp and wear strange suits; disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola. [*Exit JAQUES.*] Why, how now, Orlando! where have you been all this while? You a lover! — An you serve me such another trick, never come in my sight more.

Orl. My fair Rosalind, I come within an hour of my promise.

Ros. Break an hour's promise in love! He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts, and break but a part of a thousandth part of a minute in the affairs of love, it may be said of him that Cupid hath clapped him o' the shoulder, but I warrant him heart-whole.

Orl. Pardon me, dear Rosalind.

Ros. Nay, an you be so tardy, come no more in my sight: I had as lief be woo'd of a snail.

Orl. Of a snail!

Ros. Ay, of a snail; for though he comes slowly, he carries his house on his head; a better jointure, I think, than you can make a woman: besides, he brings his destiny with him.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Come, woo me, woo me; for now I am in a holiday humour, and like enough to consent.— What would you say to me now, an I were your very very Rosalind?

Orl. I would kiss before I spoke.

Ros. Nay, you were better speak first; and when you were gravelled for lack of matter, you might take occasion to kiss. Very good orators, when they are out, they will spit; and for lovers lacking,— God warn us! — matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.

Orl. How if the kiss be denied?

Ros. Then she puts you to entreaty, and there begins new matter.

Orl. Who could be out, being before his beloved mistress?

Ros. Marry, that should you, if I were your mistress; or I should think my honesty ranker than my wit.

Orl. What, of my suit?

Ros. Not out of your apparel, and yet out of your suit. Am not I your Rosalind?

Orl. I take some joy to say you are, because I would be talking of her.

Ros. Well, in her person, I say, I will not have you.

Orl. Then, in mine own person, I die.

Ros. No, faith, die by attorney. The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died

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in his own person, *videlicet*, in a love-cause. Troilus had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club; yet he did what he could to die before; and he is one of the patterns of love. Leander, he would have lived many a fair year, though Hero had turned nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer-night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont, and, being taken with the cramp, was drowned; and the foolish chroniclers of that age found it was — Hero of Sestos. But these are all lies; men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.

Orl. I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind; for, I protest, her frown might kill me.

Ros. By this hand, it will not kill a fly. But come, now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on disposition; and ask me what you will, I will grant it.

Orl. Then love me, Rosalind.

Ros. Yes, faith will I, Fridays and Saturdays, and all.

Orl. And wilt thou have me?

Ros. Ay, and twenty such.

Orl. What say'st thou?

Ros. Are you not good?

Orl. I hope so.

Ros. Why, then, can one desire too much of a good thing? — Come, sister, you shall be

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the priest, and marry us.— Give me your hand, Orlando:— What do you say, sister?

Orl. Pray thee, marry us.

Cel. I cannot say the words.

Ros. You must begin,— *Will you, Orlando,*—

Cel. Go to:— Will you, Orlando, have to wife this Rosalind?

Orl. I will.

Ros. Ay, but when?

Orl. Why, now; as fast as she can marry us.

Ros. Then you must say,— *I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.*

Orl. I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.

Ros. I might ask you for your commission; but,— I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband:— there's a girl goes before the priest; and, certainly, a woman's thoughts run before her actions.

Orl. So do all thoughts; they are winged.

Ros. Now tell me how long you would have her, after you have possessed her.

Orl. For ever and a day.

Ros. Say a day, without the ever. No, no, Orlando; men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen; more

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clamorous than a parrot against rain; more new-fangled than an ape; more giddy in my desires than a monkey: I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyena, and that when thou art inclined to sleep.

Orl. But will my Rosalind do so?

Ros. By my life, she will do as I do.

Orl. O, but she is wise.

Ros. Or else she could not have the wit to do this: the wiser, the waywarder: make the doors upon a woman's wit, and it will out at the casement; shut that, and it will out at the key-hole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney.

You shall never take her without her answer, unless you take her without her tongue. O, that woman that cannot make her fault her husband's occasion, let her never nurse her child herself, for she will breed it like a fool.

In a forest scene, before the banished duke, Touchstone gives proof of the rare quality of his wit:

Jaq. Good my lord, bid him welcome. This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest: he hath been a courtier, he swears.

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Touch. If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation. I have trod a measure; I have flattered a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.

Jaq. And how was that ta'en up?

Touch. Faith, we met, and found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause.

Jaq. How seventh cause?

Touch. Upon a lie seven times removed; — bear your body more seeming, Audrey: — as thus, sir, I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard; he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the mind it was: this is called the *Retort courteous*. If I sent him word again, it was not well cut, he would send me word he cut it to please himself: this is called the *Quip modest*. If again, it was not well cut, he disabled my judgment: this is called the *Reply churlish*. If again, it was not well cut, he would answer, I spake not true: this is called the *Reproof valiant*. If again, it was not well cut, he would say, I lie: this is called the *Countercheck quarrelsome*: and so, to the *Lie circumstantial*, and the *Lie direct*.

Jaq. And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?

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Touch. I durst go no farther than the *Lie circumstantial*, nor he durst not give me the *Lie direct*; and so we measured swords and parted.

Jaq. Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?

Touch. O, sir, we quarrel in print by the book, as you have books for good manners: I will name you the degrees. The first, the *Retort courteous*; the second, the *Quip modest*; the third, the *Reply churlish*; the fourth, the *Reproof valiant*; the fifth, the *Countercheck quarrelsome*; the sixth, the *Lie with circumstance*; the seventh, the *Lie direct*. All these you may avoid but the *lie direct*; and you may avoid that too with an *If*. I knew when seven justices could not take up a quarrel; but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an *If*, as *If you said so, then I said so*; and they shook hands, and swore brothers. Your *If* is the only peace-maker: — much virtue in *If*.

Jaq. Is not this a rare fellow, my lord? he's as good at anything, and yet a fool.

Duke S. He uses his folly like a stalking-horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

Oliver comes to the forest in search of Orlando, who there rescues him from the attack

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of a lion. This creates a sudden change of heart in the wicked brother: he repents of his past wrong-doing and unkindness, and is forgiven.

The usurping duke, on his way to the forest with an army, to capture and kill his brother, is converted from his enterprise, and likewise from the world, by "an old, religious man" he chances to meet, and abandons the dukedom to the rightful ruler.

In the last scene of the play Rosalind weds Orlando, and Celia his reformed brother, while Touchstone, in keeping with his professed disregard for appearances and romance, marries Audrey, an ill-favoured, simple-minded and ignorant country wench.

TWELFTH NIGHT

The story of "Twelfth Night; or What You Will," is of Italian origin. Its chief incidents are evidently derived either from a novel by Bandello or an Italian play based upon that romance and entitled "Il Sacrificio," in which there is a character named Malevolti, corresponding to Shakespeare's Malvolio.

The scene is laid in Illyria. Duke Orsino is in love with Olivia, a rich countess who has secluded herself from the world because of grief over her brother's death. Viola, a young gentlewoman who has been shipwrecked and has disguised herself in man's apparel, enters the service of the duke under the name of Cesario, and is employed by him to urge his suit with the countess. Olivia, not suspecting the deception, falls in love with the handsome messenger. Viola's brother, Sebastian, who was separated from her by the shipwreck, eventually appears. He is so much her counterpart, as she looks in masculine attire, that Olivia mistakes him for

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the pretended Cesario and woos him ardently. He at once returns her love, and a speedy marriage follows, before she discovers his identity. The duke then transfers his affections to Viola, who has been secretly in love with him.

The chief character of the comic underplot of the play is Malvolio, the exceedingly vain, affected, self-important steward of the countess. Maria, her waiting-woman, conspires with Sir Toby Belch, a convivial uncle of Olivia, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a ludicrous suitor for the hand of the countess, to play upon the vanity of Malvolio, so as to make him believe his mistress is in love with him. This deception succeeds so well that he is made utterly ridiculous, and the countess, who does not suspect the cause of his strange behaviour, is completely amazed by it.

The "clown" who figures in this play is one of the cleverest of Shakespeare's fools or jesters.

A Room in OLIVIA'S House.

Enter MARIA and CLOWN.

Mar. Nay; either tell me where thou hast been, or I will not open my lips so wide as a

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bristle may enter in way of thy excuse: my lady will hang thee for thy absence.

Clo. Let her hang me: he that is well hanged in this world needs to fear no colours.

Mar. Make that good.

Clo. He shall see none to fear.

Mar. A good lenten answer: I can tell thee where that saying was born, of, I fear no colours.

Clo. Where, good Mistress Mary?

Mar. In the wars; and that may you be bold to say in your foolery.

Clo. Well, God give them wisdom that have it; and those that are fools, let them use their talents.

Mar. Yet you will be hanged for being so long absent: or, to be turned away; is not that as good as a hanging to you?

Clo. Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage; and for turning away, let summer bear it out.

.

Enter OLIVIA and MALVOLIO.

Clo. Wit, an 't be thy will, put me into good fooling! Those wits that think they have thee, do very oft prove fools; and I, that am sure I lack thee, may pass for a wise man. For what says Quinapalus? Better a witty fool than foolish wit.— God bless thee, lady!

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Oli. Take the fool away.

Clo. Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.

Oli. Go to, you're a dry fool; I'll no more of you: besides, you grow dishonest.

Clo. Two faults, madonna, that drink and good counsel will amend: for give the dry fool drink, then is the fool not dry; bid the dishonest man mend himself: if he mend, he is no longer dishonest; if he cannot, let the botcher mend him. Anything that's mended is but patched; virtue that transgresses is but patched with sin; and sin that amends is but patched with virtue. . . . The lady bade take away the fool; therefore, I say again, take her away.

Oli. Sir, I bade them take away you.

Clo. Misprision in the highest degree! — Lady, *Cucullus non facit monachum*; that's as much as to say, I wear not motley in my brain. Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.

Oli. Can you do it?

Clo. Dexterously, good madonna.

Oli. Make your proof.

Clo. I must catechise you for it, madonna. Good my mouse of virtue, answer me.

Oli. Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll 'bide your proof.

Clo. Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?

Oli. Good fool, for my brother's death.

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Clo. I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

Oli. I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

Clo. The more fool you, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven. — Take away the fool, gentlemen.

Oli. What think you of this fool, Malvolio? doth he not mend?

Mal. Yes; and shall do, till the pangs of death shake him. Infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool.

Clo. God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better increasing your folly! Sir Toby will be sworn that I am no fox; but he will not pass his word for twopence that you are no fool.

Oli. How say you to that, Malvolio?

Mal. I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal; I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already; unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged. I protest, I take these wise men, that crow so at these set kind of fools, no better than the fools' zanies.

Oli. O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets. There is no slander in an al-

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lowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove.

In a subsequent scene the clown sings:

O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

In a merry talk with Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, Maria unfolds her plan to deceive Malvolio and make him ridiculous.

For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him: if I do not gull him into a nayword, and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed. I know I can do it.

Sir To. Possess us, possess us; tell us something of him.

Mar. Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan.

Sir And. O, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog.

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Sir To. What, for being a Puritan? thy exquisite reason, dear knight?

Sir And. I have no exquisite reason for 't, but I have reason good enough.

Mar. The devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time pleaser: an affection'd ass that cons state without book and utters it by great swarths; the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellences, that it is his ground of faith that all that look on him love him; and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work.

Sir To. What wilt thou do?

Mar. I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of love; wherein, by the colour of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expresseure of his eye, forehead, and complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated. I can write very like my lady, your niece; on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands.

Sir To. Excellent! I smell a device.

Sir And. I have 't in my nose too.

Sir To. He shall think, by the letters that thou wilt drop, that they come from my niece, and that she is in love with him.

Mar. My purpose is, indeed, a horse of that colour.

Sir And. And your horse now would make him an ass.

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Maria writes a cunningly worded love letter in a counterfeit of Olivia's hand, and drops it on a walk in the garden when Malvolio is approaching. The two jocular knights and Fabian, a servant, hide themselves where they can hear what he may say, and Maria disappears.

Enter MALVOLIO.

Mal. 'Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me: and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than anyone else that follows her. What should I think on 't?

Sir To. Here's an overwhelming rogue!

Fab. O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him; how he jets under his advanced plumes!

Sir And. 'Slight, I could so beat the rogue:—

Sir To. Peace, I say.

Mal. To be Count Malvolio;—

Sir To. Ah, rogue!

Sir And. Pistol him, pistol him.

Sir To. Peace, peace.

Mal. There is example for 't; the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

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Sir And. Fie on him, Jezebel!

Fab. O, peace! now he's deeply in; look how imagination blows him.

Mal. Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state,—

Sir To. O for a stone-bow to hit him in the eye!

Mal. Calling my officers about me in my branched velvet gown; having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping.

Sir To. Fire and brimstone!

Fab. O, peace, peace.

Mal. And then to have the humour of state: and after a demure travel of regard,—telling them I know my place as I would they should do theirs,—to ask for my kinsman Toby.

Sir To. Bolts and shackles!

Fab. O, peace, peace, peace! now, now.

Mal. Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for him: I frown the while; and perchance, wind up my watch, or play with some rich jewel. Toby approaches; court'sies there to me:

Sir To. Shall this fellow live?

Fab. Though our silence be drawn from us with cars, yet peace.

Mal. I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar smile with an austere regard of control:

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Sir To. And does not Toby take you a blow o' the lips then?

Mal. Saying, *Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on your niece, give me this prerogative of speech:—*

Sir To. What, what?

Mal. You must amend your drunkenness.

Sir To. Out, scab!

Fab. Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot.

Mal. Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with a foolish knight;

Sir And. That's me, I warrant you.

Mal. One Sir Andrew:

Sir And. I knew 'twas I; for many do call me fool.

Mal. What employment have we here?

[*Taking up the letter.*]

Fab. Now is the woodcock near the gin.

Sir To. O, peace! and the spirit of humours intimate reading aloud to him!

Mal. By my life, this is my lady's hand: these be her very *C's*, her *U's*, and her *T's*; and thus makes she her great *P's*. It is in contempt of question her hand.

Sir And. Her *C's*, her *U's*, and her *T's*. Why that?

Mal. [*reads.*] *To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes: her very phrases!—* By your leave, wax.— Soft! — and the impres-

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sure her Lucrece, with which she uses to seal:
'tis my lady. To whom should this be?

Fab. This wins him, liver and all.

Mal. [*reads.*] *Jove knows I love:*

But, who?

Lips do not move,

No man must know.

No man must know.—What follows? the numbers altered! —*No man must know:* — If this should be thee, Malvolio?

Sir To. Marry, hang thee, brock!

Mal. *I may command where I adore:*

But silence, like a Lucrece knife,

With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore;

M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.

Fab. A fustian riddle!

Sir To. Excellent wench, say I.

Mal. M, O, A, I, *doth sway my life.*—

Nay, but first let me see,—let me see,—let me see.

Fab. What a dish of poison hath she dressed him!

Sir To. And with what wing the stannyl checks at it!

Mal. *I may command where I adore.*

Why, she may command me: I serve her, she is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal capacity. There is no obstruction in this;—And the end,—What should that alphabetical position portend? If I could make that re-

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semble something in me,—Softly!—*M, O, A, I.*—

Sir To. O, ay! make up that:—he is now at a cold scent.

Mal. *M,*—Malvolio;—*M,*—why, that begins my name.

Mal. But then there is no consonancy in the sequel; that suffers under probation: *A* should follow, but *O* does.

Fab. And *O* shall end, I hope.

Sir To. Ay, or I'll cudgel him, and make him cry *O*.

Mal. And then *I* comes behind.

Fab. Ay, an you had any eye behind you, you might see more detraction at your heels than fortunes before you.

Mal. *M, O, A, I;*—This simulation is not as the former:—and yet, to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in my name. Soft; here follows prose.—*If this fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars I am above thee; but be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. Thy fates open their hands; let thy blood and spirit embrace them. And, to insure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy humble slough and appear fresh. Be*

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opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants: let thy tongue tang arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity: She thus advises thee that sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered. I say, remember. Go to; thou art made, if thou desirest to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch fortune's fingers. Farewell. She that would alter services with thee,

The fortunate unhappy.

Daylight and champian discovers not more: this is open. I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance, I will be point-de-vice, the very man. I do not now fool myself to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-gartered; and in this she manifests herself to my love, and, with a kind of injunction, drives me to these habits of her liking. I thank my stars I am happy. I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings, and cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. Jove and my stars be praised!—Here is yet a postscript. *Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou entertainest my love, let it appear in thy smiling; thy*

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smiles become thee well: therefore in my presence still smile, dear my sweet, I pr'ythee. Jove, I thank thee.—I will smile: I will do everything that thou wilt have me. [Exit.

Fab. I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the Sophy.

Sir To. I could marry this wench for this device:

Sir And. So could I too.

Sir To. And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest.

Enter MARIA.

• • • • •
Sir To. Why, thou hast put him in such a dream, that, when the image of it leaves him, he must run mad.

• • • • •
Mar. If you will then see the fruits of the sport, mark his first approach before my lady: he will come to her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a colour she abhors; and cross-gartered, a fashion she detests; and he will smile upon her, which will now be so unsuitable to her disposition, being addicted to a melancholy as she is, that it cannot but turn him into a notable contempt: if you will see it, follow me.

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In a subsequent scene Maria reports to Sir Toby that Malvolio has donned yellow stockings and is cross-gartered "most villainously." She adds:

He does obey every point of the letter that I dropped to betray him. He does smile his face into more lines than are in the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies: you have not seen such a thing as 'tis; I can hardly forbear hurling things at him. I know my lady will strike him; if she do, he'll smile, and take 't for a great favour.

Sir To. Come, bring us, bring us where he is. [*Exeunt.*]

Later, in the garden, Olivia is warned by Maria that Malvolio is coming "in strange manner"; that "he is sure possessed," "tainted in his wits."

Oli. Go call him hither.—I'm as mad as he,
If sad and merry madness equal be.—

Enter MALVOLIO.

How now, Malvolio?

Mal. Sweet lady, ho, ho.
[*Smiles fantastically.*]

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Oli. Smil'st thou?

I sent for thee upon a sad occasion.

Mal. Sad, lady? I could be sad: this does make some obstruction in the blood, this cross-gartering. But what of that; if it please the eye of one, it is with me as the very true sonnet is: *Please one and please all.*

Oli. Why, how dost thou, man; what is the matter with thee?

Mal. Not black in my mind, though yellow in my legs. It did come to his hands, and commands shall be executed. I think we do know the sweet Roman hand.

Oli. God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile on, and kiss thy hand so oft?

Mar. How do you, Malvolio?

Mal. At your request? Yes; nightingales answer daws.

Mar. Why appear you with this ridiculous boldness before my lady?

Mal. *Be not afraid of greatness:—'twas well writ.*

Oli. What meanest thou by that, Malvolio?

Mal. *Some are born great,—*

Oli. Ha?

Mal. *Some achieve greatness,—*

Oli. What say'st thou?

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Mal. And some have greatness thrust upon them.

Oli. Heaven restore thee!

Mal. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings:—

Oli. Thy yellow stockings?

Mal. And wished to see thee cross-gartered.

Oli. Cross-gartered?

Mal. Go to: thou art made, if thou desirest to be so:—

Oli. Am I made?

Mal. If not, let me see thee a servant still.

Oli. Why, this is very midsummer madness.

.

Oli. Good Maria, let this fellow be looked to. Where's my cousin Toby? Let some of my people have a special care of him; I would not have him miscarry for the half of my dowry.

[*Exeunt OLIVIA and MARIA.*]

Mal. Oh, ho! do you come near me now? no worse man than Sir Toby to look to me? This concurs directly with the letter: she sends him on purpose that I may appear stubborn to him; for she incites me to that in the letter. *Cast thy humble slough*, says she;— *be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants*,— *let thy tongue tang with arguments of state*,— *put thyself into the trick of singularity*;— and,

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consequently, sets down the manner how; as, a sad face, a reverend carriage, a slow tongue, in the habit of some sir of note, and so forth. I have limed her; but it is Jove's doing, and Jove make me thankful! And, when she went away now, *Let this fellow be looked to:* Fellow! not Malvolio, nor after my degree, but fellow. Why, everything adheres together; that no dram of a scruple, no scruple of a scruple, no obstacle, no incredulous or unsafe circumstance,—What can be said? Nothing, that can be, can come between me and the full prospect of my hopes. Well, Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.

Maria returns and, with the help of Sir Toby and Fabian, amuses herself by pretending, before Malvolio, that she thinks him possessed by a devil, mad or bewitched. Malvolio treats them disdainfully and retires, saying:

Go, hang yourselves all! you are idle shallow things: I am not of your element; you shall know more hereafter.

After the deluded steward goes out, Sir Toby tells Maria and Fabian that he will have Malvolio put in a dark room and bound, "for their pleasure and his penance," until they tire of the pastime and have mercy upon him. The

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victim being thus shut up, Maria induces the clown to personate Sir Topas the curate, so as to deceive Malvolio and entertain Sir Toby.

Clo. What, hoa, I say,—Peace in this prison!

Sir To. The knave counterfeits well; a good knave.

Mal. [*In an inner chamber.*] Who calls there?

Clo. Sir Topas the curate, who comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic.

Mal. Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, go to my lady.

Clo. Out, hyperbolic fient! how vexest thou this man? talkest thou nothing but of ladies?

Sir To. Well said, master parson.

Mal. Sir Topas, never was man thus wronged: good Sir Topas, do not think I am mad; they have laid me here in hideous darkness.

Clo. Fie, thou dishonest Sathan! I call thee by the most modest terms; for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the devil himself with courtesy. Say'st thou that house is dark?

Mal. As hell, Sir Topas.

Clo. Why, it hath bay-windows, transparent as barricadoes, and the clear storeys to-

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wards the south-north are as lustrous as ebony; and yet complainest thou of obstruction?

Mal. I am not mad, Sir Topas; I say to you this house is dark.

Clo. Madman, thou errest. I say there is no darkness but ignorance; in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog.

Mal. I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell; and I say there was never man thus abused. I am no more mad than you are; make the trial of it in any constant question.

Clo. What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?

Mal. That the soul of our grandam might haply inherit a bird.

Clo. What thinkest thou of his opinion?

Mal. I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve of his opinion.

Clo. Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness: thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow thy wits; and fear to kill a woodcock lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam. Fare thee well.

The clown then diverts himself by talking in his own voice and person to the imprisoned steward.

Clo. . . . Who calls, ha?

Mal. Good fool, as ever thou wilt deserve

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well at my hand, help me to a candle, and pen, ink, and paper; as I am a gentleman, I will live to be thankful to thee for 't.

Clo. Master Malvolio!

Mal. Ay, good fool.

Clo. Alas, sir, how fell you beside your five wits?

Mal. Fool, there was never man so notoriously abused; I am as well in my wits, fool, as thou art.

Clo. But as well? then you are mad indeed, if you be no better in your wits than a fool.

Mal. They have here propertied me; keep me in darkness, send ministers to me, asses, and do all they can to face me out of my wits.

Clo. Advise you what you say; the minister is here.—Malvolio, Malvolio, thy wits the heavens restore! endeavour thyself to sleep, and leave thy vain bibble-babble.

Mal. Sir Topas,—

Clo. Maintain no words with him, good fellow. Who, I, sir? not I, sir. God b' wi' you, good Sir Topas.—Marry, amen.—I will, sir, I will.

Mal. Fool, fool, fool, I say,—

Clo. Alas, sir, be patient. What say you, sir? I am shent for speaking to you.

Mal. Good fool, help me to some light and some paper; I tell thee I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria.

WIT AND HUMOUR

Clo. Well-a-day,— that you were, sir!

Mal. By this hand, I am: Good fool, some ink, paper, and light, and convey what I will set down to my lady; it shall advantage thee more than ever the bearing of letter did.

Clo. I will help you to 't. But tell me true, are you not mad indeed? or do you but counterfeit?

Mal. Believe me, I am not; I tell thee true.

Clo. Nay, I'll ne'er believe a madman till I see his brains. I will fetch you light, and paper, and ink.

The letter written by the duped Malvolio in his confinement is conveyed to his mistress by the clown, and his complaint that she has wronged him by means of a letter gives her an inkling that some deception has been practised. She sends for him, and when he appears and shows the missive that Maria dropped in the garden for him to pick up, Olivia recognises Maria's handwriting. Fabian then reveals the sportive plot to make a laughing stock of the vain and pretentious steward, and Olivia expresses much sympathy for him in his discomfiture. But the clown cannot forbear to exult over the crestfallen victim, mocking him in this fashion:

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Why, *some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrown upon them.* I was one, sir, in this interlude; one Sir Topas, sir; but that's all one: — *By the Lord, fool, I am not mad;* — But do you remember? *Madam, why laugh you at such a barren rascal? an you smile not, he's gagged.* And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.

Malvolio goes off, vowing vengeance on all his persecutors. But as Fabian announces that Sir Toby has married Maria, in recompense for writing the decoy letter which afforded him so much entertainment through the fooling of Malvolio, it is to be presumed that she has little reason to fear the steward's resentment and is well satisfied with the result of her clever trickery.

THE WINTER'S TALE

“The Winter’s Tale” seems to have been so named because the moving, romantic story it unfolds is well suited to be told by the fire-side, and to beguile of tediousness the long hours of a wintry evening. Or, more directly, the title may have been suggested by the remark of Hermione’s son to his mother, in the first scene of the second act: “A sad tale’s best for winter.”

The plot is based upon “Pandosto,” a novel by Robert Greene, popular in Shakespeare’s day.

Leontes, King of Sicilia, insanely and without cause jealous of his devoted wife Hermione, casts her into prison, where she gives birth to a daughter. By the king’s orders the infant is exposed to death, on a remote and desolate coast, where it is found and reared by shepherds, and is by them named Perdita. The queen’s innocence is subsequently declared by an oracle, but, on being told of the death of

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her son Mamillius, she falls in a swoon and is borne away by her faithful women. She is mourned as dead by Leontes, but lives in concealment for sixteen years, and is then restored to him.

Perdita, who is of rare charm and gentleness when grown to womanhood, is encountered by Florizel, Crown Prince of the kingdom in which she is reared, and in the disguise of a shepherd he woos her and wins her love. Eventually her identity is established, and all ends happily.

The comic character of the play is Autolycus, a merry pedlar, thief and liar, who picks the pockets of the rustics and diverts himself by their ignorance and simplicity.

Enter AUTOLYCUS, singing.

When daffodils begin to peer,—

With, hey! the doxy over the dale,—

Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;

For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,—

With, hey! the sweet birds, O, how they sing! —

Doth set my pugging tooth on edge;

For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

The lark, that tirra-lirra chants,—

With, hey! with, hey! the thrush and the jay,—

Are summer songs for me and my aunts,

While we lie tumbling in the hay.

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I have served Prince Florizel, and, in my time, wore three-pile; but now I am out of service:

But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?
The pale moon shines by night:
And when I wander here and there,
I then do most go right.

If tinkers may have leave to live,
And bear the sow-skin budget,
Then my account I well may give
And in the stocks avouch it.

My traffic is sheets; when the kite builds, look to lesser linen. My father named me Autolycus; who being, as I am, littered under Mercury, was likewise a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. With die and drab I purchased this caparison; and my revenue is the silly-cheat: gallows and knock are too powerful on the highway; beating and hanging are terrors to me; for the life to come, I sleep out the thought of it.— A prize! a prize!

Enter Clown.

Clo. Let me see:— every 'leven wether tods; every tod yields pound and odd shilling; fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to?

Aut. If the springe hold, the cock's mine.
[*Aside.*

Clo. I cannot do 't without counters.— Let me see; what am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? *Three pound of sugar; five*

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pound of currants; rice — what will this sister of mine do with rice? But my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and she lays it on. She hath made me four-and-twenty nose-gays for the shearers,—three-man song-men all, and very good ones; but they are most of them means and bases; but one puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes. I must have *saffron*, to colour the warden pies; *mace* — *dates*,— none; that's out of my note; *nutmegs*, *seven*; *a race or two of ginger*,— but that I may beg; *four pound of prunes*, and *as many of raisins o' the sun*.

Aut. O that ever I was born!

[*Groveling on the ground.*]

Clo. I' the name of me,—

Aut. O, help me, help, me! pluck but off these rags; and then, death, death!

Clo. Alack, poor soul! thou hast need of more rags to lay on thee, rather than have these off.

Aut. O, sir, the loathsomeness of them offends me more than the stripes I have received, which are mighty ones and millions.

Clo. Alas, poor man! a million of beating may come to a great matter.

Aut. I am robbed, sir, and beaten; my money and apparel ta'en from me, and these detestable things put upon me.

Clo. What, by a horseman or a footman?

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Aut. A footman, sweet sir, a footman.

Clo. Indeed, he should be a footman, by the garments he has left with thee: if this be a horseman's coat, it hath seen very hot service. Lend me thy hand, I'll help thee: come, lend me thy hand. [*Helping him up.*]

Aut. O, good sir, tenderly, O!

Clo. Alas, poor soul!

Aut. Oh, good sir, softly, good sir: I fear, sir, my shoulder blade is out.

Clo. How now! canst stand?

Aut. Softly, dear sir! [*picks his pocket*] good sir, softly; you ha' done me a charitable office.

Clo. Dost lack any money? I have a little money for thee.

Aut. No, good sweet sir; no, I beseech you, sir: I have a kinsman not past three quarters of a mile hence, unto whom I was going; I shall there have money or anything I want: offer me no money, I pray you; that kills my heart.

Clo. What manner of fellow was he that robbed you?

Aut. A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about with troll-my-dames: I knew him once a servant of the prince: I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipped out of the court.

Clo. His vices, you would say; there's no

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virtue whipped out of the court: they cherish it, to make it stay there; and yet it will no more but abide.

Aut. Vices, I would say, sir. I know this man well: he hath been since an ape-bearer; then a process-server, a bailiff; then he compassed a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife within a mile where my land and living lies; and, having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue: some call him Autolycus.

Clo. Out upon him! prig, for my life, prig: he haunts wakes, fairs, and bear-baitings.

Aut. Very true, sir; he, sir, he; that's the rogue that put me into this apparel.

Clo. Not a more cowardly rogue in all Bohemia; if you had but looked big and spit at him, he'd have run.

Aut. I must confess to you, sir, I am no fighter: I am false of heart that way; and that he knew, I warrant him.

Clo. How do you now?

Aut. Sweet sir, much better than I was; I can stand and walk: I will even take my leave of you, and pace softly towards my kinsman's.

Clo. Shall I bring thee on the way?

Aut. No, good-faced sir; no, sweet sir.

Clo. Then fare thee well: I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing.

Aut. Prosper you, sweet sir! [*Exit*

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Clown.] Your purse is not hot enough to purchase your spice. I'll be with you at your sheep-shearing too. If I make not this cheat bring out another, and the shearers prove sheep, let me be enrolled, and my name put in the book of virtue! [Sings.

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

[Exit.

While the shepherds and shepherdesses are celebrating the sheepshearing with feasting and dancing, a servant enters and announces the arrival of Autolycus :

Serv. O master, if you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabor and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you: he sings several tunes faster than you'll tell money: he utters them as he had eaten ballads, and all men's ears grew to his tunes.

Clo. He could never come better: he shall come in: I love a ballad but even too well: if it be doleful matter merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing indeed and sung lamentably.

Serv. He hath songs for man or woman of all sizes; no milliner can so fit his customers with gloves: — he has the prettiest love-songs for maids.

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Clo. Pr'ythee, bring him in; and let him approach singing.

.

Enter AUTOLYCUS, *singing.*

Lawn as white as driven snow;
Cyprus black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask-roses;
Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle-bracelet, necklace amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears;
Pins and poking-sticks of steel,
What maids lack from head to heel.
Come, buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry:
Come, buy.

Autolycus proceeds to sell absurd ballads to men and maids, certifying to their truth with most extravagant lies. He goes out with the rustics, and after a time returns and exults to himself in this fashion:

Ha, ha! what a fool Honesty is! and Trust, his sworn brother, a very simple gentleman! I have sold all my trumpery; not a counterfeit stone, not a riband, glass, pomander, brooch, table-book, ballad, knife, tape, glove, shoe-tie, bracelet, horn-ring, to keep my pack from fasting; — they throng who should buy first, as if my trinkets had been hallowed, and brought a

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benediction to the buyer: by which means I saw whose purse was best in picture; and what I saw, to my good use I remembered. My clown (who wants but something to be a reasonable man) grew so in love with the wenches' song that he would not stir his pettitoes till he had both tune and words; which so drew the rest of the herd to me, that all their other senses stuck in ears: . . . I would have filed keys off that hung in chains: no hearing, no feeling, but my sir's song, and admiring the nothing of it. So that, in this time of lethargy, I picked and cut most of their festival purses; and had not the old man come in with a whoobub against his daughter and the king's son, and scared my choughs from the chaff, I had not left a purse alive in the whole army.

To have an open ear, a quick eye, and a nimble hand, is necessary for a cut-purse; a good nose is requisite also, to smell out work for the other senses.

TRAGEDIES AND HISTORICAL PLAYS

The impression is common that Shakespeare made a practice of introducing amusing characters, wit or humour, in his tragedies, for the purpose of "comic relief." But this is not entirely well founded. Such variety is seen in some of his tragedies and historical plays, but not in others. There is little or nothing to provoke mirth, or even a smile, in "King Richard II," "King John," "Pericles," the three parts of "King Henry VI," "King Henry VIII," "Titus Andronicus," and "Coriolanus." King Richard III, in the play of the same name, exhibits much biting satire, but it is far from laughable. In "Julius Cæsar" there is nothing comic other than a few lines given the cobbler in the opening scene. In "Macbeth" one of the most tense situations is relieved by the porter's humourously coarse observations when knocking is heard and he admits Macduff, but otherwise the drama is wholly sombre.

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The tragic strain of "Othello," on the other hand, is somewhat offset by the cynical wit of Iago. "Romeo and Juliet" has much wit and humour, to which Mercutio, the friar and the nurse contribute richly. The bitter wit of the fool in "King Lear" is scarcely mirthful, but exceedingly incisive and illuminating.

Of the historical plays "King Henry IV" is remarkable for comic features, each of the two parts into which the play is divided being lavishly enriched by the wit and humour of Prince Henry and inimitable Falstaff, with his retinue of entertaining characters. There is also much amusement in "King Henry V."

Even the pervading melancholy and gloom of "Hamlet" are relieved by the ironical wit and philosophic humour of the prince, and also by the chop-logic of the grave-diggers.

"Julius Cæsar" opens with a street scene, in which "a rabble of citizens," gathered to rejoice in the ruler's triumph over Pompey, is accosted by Flavius and Marullus, enemies of the conqueror. Singling out one of the gathering, Marullus questions him.

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Marullus. You, sir, what trade are you?

2 Cit. Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.

Mar. But what trade art thou? answer me directly.

2 Cit. A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience; which is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

Mar. What trade, thou knave, thou naughty knave, what trade?

2 Cit. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

Mar. What meanest thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

2 Cit. Why, sir, cobble you.

Flav. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

2 Cit. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl. I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I re-cover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neats-leather have gone upon my handiwork.

Flav. But wherefore art not in thy shop to-day?

Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

2 Cit. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work. But, indeed,

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sir, we make holiday to see Cæsar, and to rejoice in his triumph.

In "King Henry VI" the rebel Cade is made highly ludicrous by his own exhibitions of ignorance and lack of intelligence. The characterisation is especially strong when he addresses his followers at Blackheath:

Cade. Be brave, then; for your captain is brave, and vows reformation. There shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny: the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops; and I will make it felony to drink small beer: all the realm shall be in common; and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass: and when I am king,— as king I will be,—

All. God save your majesty!

Cade. I thank you good people:— there shall be no money; all shall eat and drink on my score; and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers, and worship me their lord.

Dick. The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.

Cade. Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment? that parchment, being scribbled o'er, should undo a man? Some say the bee stings; but I say 'tis

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the bee's wax; for I did but seal once to a thing, and I was never mine own man since. . . .

In a later scene, at Smithfield, the arch-rebel thus arraigns the captive Lord Say:

Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school: and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used; and, contrary to the king, his crown, and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear. Thou hast appointed justices of peace, to call poor men before them about matters they were not able to answer. Moreover, thou hast put them in prison; and because they could not read, thou hast hanged them; when, indeed, only for that cause they have been most worthy to live. Thou dost ride in a foot-cloth, dost thou not?

Say. What of that?

Cade. Marry, thou oughtest not to let thy horse wear a cloak, when honest men than thou go in their hose and doublets.

The cynical wit of the evil-minded Iago is strikingly shown in the second act of "Othello."

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The scene is at Cyprus. Desdemona, bride of the Moor, and Emilia, her waiting-woman and wife to Iago, enter and are greeted by Cassio, lieutenant to Othello.

Cassio. Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

(*Kissing her.*)

Iago. Sir, would she give you so much of her lips
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

Des. Alas, she has no speech.

Iago. In faith, too much;
I find it still when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

Emil. You have little cause to say so.

Iago. Come on, come on; you are pictures
out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being of-
fended.

Des. What wouldst thou write of me if
thou shouldst praise me?

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Iago. O gentle lady, do not put me to 't;
For I am nothing if not critical.

.

If she be fair and wise,— fairness and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.

Des. Well prais'd! How if she be black
and witty?

Iago. If she be black, and thereto have a
wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

Des. Worse and worse.

.

Des. But what praise couldst thou bestow
on a deserving woman indeed,— one that, in
the authority of her merit, did justly put on the
vouch of very malice itself?

Iago. She that was ever fair, and never
proud;
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;
Fled from her wish, and yet said, *Now I may*;
She that, being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure
fly;
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her
mind;
See suitors following, and not look behind;
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,—

Des. To do what?

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Iago. To suckle fools and chronicle small
beer.

Des. O most lame and impotent conclu-
sion!

One of the most interesting of Shakespeare's characters is Mercutio, in "Romeo and Juliet," who falls a victim to the deadly feud between the Capulets and Montagues. He is distinguished for light-hearted merriment, alert wit and playful fancy. In a street scene he exchanges jests with Romeo.

Rom. I dreamt a dream to-night.

Mer. And so did I.

Rom. Well, what was yours?

Mer. That dreamers often lie.

Rom. In bed asleep, while they do dream
things true.

Mer. O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been
with you.

She is the fairies' midwife; and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners'
legs;

The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
The traces, of the smallest spider's web;

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The collars, of the moonshine's watery beams;
Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;
Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid:
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of
love:

O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies
straight;

O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on
fees;

O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses
dream,—

Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted
are:

Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail,
Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice:

Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes;

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And, being thus frightened, swears a prayer or
two,
And sleeps again.

Before he met Juliet, and fell in love with her at sight, Romeo had made no secret of his transitory passion for Rosaline, and openly grieved because she was unmoved. This gives point to the ridicule cast upon him by Friar Lawrence in the following colloquy, when Romeo visits him in his cell :

Fri. L. Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift;

Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

Rom. Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set

On the fair daughter of rich Capulet :

As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine ;

And all combin'd, save what thou must combine

By holy marriage : when, and where, and how

We met, we woo'd, and made exchange of vow,

I'll tell thee as we pass ; but this I pray,

That thou consent to marry us to-day.

Fri. L. Holy St. Francis ! what a change is here !

Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,

So soon forsaken ? young men's love, then, lies

Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.

Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine

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Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!
How much salt water thrown away in waste,
To season love, that of it doth not taste!
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears;
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet:
If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline:
And art thou chang'd? pronounce this sen-
tence, then,—

Women may fall, when there's no strength in
men.

Rom. Thou chidd'st me oft for loving
Rosaline.

Fri. L. For doting, not for loving, pupil
mine.

Rom. And bad'st me bury love.

Fri. L. Not in a grave,
To lay one in, another out to have.

Rom. I pray thee, chide not: she whom I
love now

Doth grace for grace and love for love allow;
The other did not so.

Fri. L. O, she knew well
Thy love did read by rote, and could not spell.

An amusing scene is that between Juliet and her old nurse, by whom she had sent Romeo a message. Juliet is wildly impatient for her an-

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swer, which the nurse, with characteristic stubbornness and beating about the bush, delays to give when she returns.

Enter Nurse and PETER.

Jul. . . . O honey nurse, what news?
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

Nurse. Peter, stay at the gate.

[*Exit PETER.*

Jul. Now, good sweet nurse,—O Lord,
why look'st thou sad?
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;
If good, thou sham'st the music of sweet news
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

Nurse. I am a-weary, give me leave a-
while;—

Fie, how my bones ache! what a jaunt have I
had!

Jul. I would thou hadst my bones and I thy
news:

Nay, come, I pray thee; speak;—good, good
nurse, speak.

Nurse. Jesu, what haste? can you not stay
awhile?

Do you not see that I am out of breath?

Jul. How art thou out of breath, when
thou hast breath

To say to me that thou art out of breath?

The excuse that thou dost make in this delay

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Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.
Is thy news good or bad? answer to that;
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance:
Let me be satisfied, is 't good or bad?

Nurse. Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man: Romeo! no, not he; though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body,— though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare: he is not the flower of courtesy,— but I'll warrant him as gentle as a lamb.— Go thy ways, wench; serve God.— What, have you dined at home?

Jul. No, no: but all this did I know before. What says he of our marriage? What of that?

Nurse. Lord, how my head aches! what a head have I!

It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.
My back o' t' other side,— O, my back, my back! —

Beshrew your heart for sending me about
To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

Jul. I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.

Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

Nurse. Your love says, like an honest gentleman,

And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,

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And, I warrant, a virtuous,— Where is your mother?

Jul. Where is my mother! — why, she is within;
Where should she be? How oddly thou re-
pliest!

*Your love says, like an honest gentleman,—
Where is your mother?*

Nurse. O, God's lady dear!
Are you so hot? marry, come up, I trow;
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?
Henceforward, do your messages yourself.

Jul. Here's such a coil! — come, what says
Romeo?

Nurse. Have you got leave to go to shrift
to-day?

Jul. I have.

Nurse. Then hie you hence to Friar Law-
rence' cell;
There stays a husband to make you a
wife. . . .

Jul. Hie to high fortune! — honest nurse,
farewell.

Peter, a servant, talks to musicians in Capu-
let's house:

Pet. Then have at you with my wit! I
will dry-beat you with an iron wit, and put up
my iron dagger.— Answer me like men:

When griping grief the heart doth wound,
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,
Then music with her silver sound—

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why *silver sound*? why *music with her silver sound*? — What say you, Simon Catling?

1 *Mus.* Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

Pet. Pretty! — What say you, Hugh Rebeck?

2 *Mus.* I say *silver sound* because musicians sound for silver.

Pet. Pretty too! — What say you, James Sound-post?

3 *Mus.* Faith, I know not what to say.

Pet. O, I cry you mercy; you are the singer: I will say for you. It is *music with her silver sound* because musicians have no gold for sounding: —

Then music with her silver sound
With speedy help doth lend redress.

An encounter of wits between Romeo and Mercutio in a street meeting:

Mer. Well said: follow me this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump; that when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain, after the wearing, sole singular.

Rom. O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!

Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio; my wits faint.

Rom. Switch and spurs, switch and spurs; or I'll cry a match.

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Mer. Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase, I have done; for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits than, I am sure, I have in my whole five: was I with you there for the goose?

Rom. Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast not there for the goose.

Mer. I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not.

Mer. Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp sauce.

Rom. And is it not well served in to a sweet goose?

Mer. O, here's a wit of cheveril, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

Rom. I stretch it out for that word, broad: which added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

Mer. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo.

Claudius, King of Denmark, is murdered by his brother, who pours poison in his ears while he sleeps. The murderer then occupies the throne and marries the widow of the dead king. Prince Hamlet, son of Claudius, is informed by his father's ghost of the secret

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crime, and is sworn to vengeance. The position of the prince in the court and household of the usurper being one of peril, it is needful for him to conceal his knowledge of the truth, and, while waiting opportunity for revenge, to mask his real feelings and purposes. The better to disarm suspicion, he at times, as occasion arises, pretends to be mentally deranged.

Hamlet's uncle, however, is uneasy, and instructs Guildenstern, a false friend of the prince, and also the Lord Chamberlain Polonius, a very politic and dissembling old courtier, to ascertain his state of mind, his secret thoughts and aims. The manner of Guildenstern's final rebuff by the wary and keen-witted prince is shown in the first of the following extracts from the play of "Hamlet," and also the prince's intentional mystification of Polonius. The prince is really amusing himself at the expense of the Lord Chamberlain, who echoes Hamlet's seemingly distraught and contradictory remarks.

Ham. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

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Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think that I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me you cannot play upon me.

Enter POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

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Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by.— They fool me to the top of my bent.— I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

Ham. By and by is easily said. [Exit.

A Churchyard. Enter two Clowns with spades, &c.

1 Clo. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2 Clo. I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1 Clo. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

2 Clo. Why, 'tis found so.

1 Clo. It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

2 Clo. Nay, but hear you, goodman deliver,—

1 Clo. Give me leave. Here lies the water: good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is,

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will he, nill he, he goes,— mark you that: but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

2 *Clo.* But is this law?

1 *Clo.* Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

2 *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian.— Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none.

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, Adam digged: could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself,—

2 *Clo.* Go to.

1 *Clo.* What is he that builds stronger

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than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

2 *Clo.* Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clo.* To 't.

2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1 *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say a grave-maker; the houses that he makes last till doomsday.

.

[Throws up a skull.]

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'erreaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

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Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier; which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?* This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it,—might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see 't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on 't.

.

[Clown *throws up another skull.*]

Ham. There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognisances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and dou-

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ble ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.— Whose grave's this, sir?

I Clo. Mine, sir.—

O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet. [Sings.]

Ham. I think it be thine indeed; for thou liest in 't.

I Clo. You lie out on 't sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't, and say it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

I Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

I Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then?

I Clo. For none, neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in 't?

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I Clo. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe.—How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

I Clo. Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last King Hamlet o'er-came Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

I Clo. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was the very day that young Hamlet was born,—he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

I Clo. Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

I Clo. 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

I Clo. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

I Clo. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

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1 Clo. Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah!

[*Throws down the skull.*]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus; Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth which kept the world in awe
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's
flaw! —

FOOLS AND CLOWNS

Shakespeare seems to have used the words fool and clown indiscriminately to signify a professional jester. Thus in the list of "persons represented" in "As You Like It" Touchstone is described as "a clown or domestic fool." The jester in "Twelfth Night" is set down as "a clown." But our author also uses the word clown to signify a rude and illiterate country lout or rustic.

From a very early period in England, as in European countries generally, it was the practice of kings and nobles to retain a fool or jester, who was allowed the utmost freedom in his personal references, a licence which often was carried far beyond what now would seem the furthest bounds of toleration. The fool, however, was expected to entertain by his wit and skill in questioning and repartee. All of Shakespeare's fools are witty, and show a kind of wisdom in their jests. Thus Viola says of the "clown" in "Twelfth Night":

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This fellow's wise enough to play the fool;
And, to do that well, craves a kind of wit:
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of persons, and the time;
And, like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labour as a wise man's art:
For folly, that he wisely shows, is fit;
But wise men, folly-fallen, quite taint their wit.

And in the same play Olivia says:

There is no slander in an allowed fool,
though he do nothing but rave.

Some of the brightest and most oft-quoted sayings in the plays of Shakespeare come from the mouths of the wearers of motley and cap and bells. And there is much knowledge of human nature, as well as delightful humour in this observation by Touchstone, the domestic jester in "As You Like It":

When a man's verses cannot be understood,
nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room.

It is Touchstone, too, who discriminates between the "lie circumstantial" and the "lie

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direct," and remarks the saving virtue of "your if," "the only peace-maker."

An erratic or antic disposition seems to have been essential for success in the fool's calling, which is indicated by the remark of Dr. Thomas Fuller regarding the court jester, that "it is an office which none but he that hath wit can perform, and none but he that lacks it will perform."

The four plays of Shakespeare in each of which a professional fool or clown figures are "King Lear," "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night," and "All's Well That Ends Well."

The fool in "Lear" is a most remarkable character, distinguished not only by his bitter and penetrating wit but also by his worldly philosophy and his touching devotion to his royal master.

In this book the best of Touchstone's wit will be found under the title of "As You Like It," and of the clown in "Twelfth Night," in the chapter devoted to that play.

An illustrative example of the quality of the jester in "All's Well That Ends Well" is here subjoined, but the countess is more than a match for him at his own game of banter:

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ROUSILLON. *A Room in the COUNTESS's Palace.*

Enter COUNTESS and CLOWN.

Count. Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

Clo. I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught: I know my business is but to the court.

Count. To the court! why, what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

Clo. Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court: he that cannot make a leg, put off 's cap, kiss his hand, and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and, indeed, such a fellow, to say precisely, were not fit for the court: but, for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

.
Count. Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

.
Clo. From below your duke to beneath your constable it will fit any question.

Count. It must be an answer of most monstrous size that must fit all demands.

Clo. But a trifle neither, in good faith, if

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the learned should speak truth of it: here it is, and all that belongs to 't. Ask me if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

Count. To be young again, if we could: I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier?

Clo. O Lord, sir! — There's a simple putting off; — more, more, a hundred of them.

Count. Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

Clo. O Lord, sir! — Thick, thick; spare not me.

Count. I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

Clo. O Lord, sir! — Nay, put me to 't, I warrant you.

Count. You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

Clo. O Lord, sir! — spare not me.

Count. Do you cry, *O Lord, sir!* at your whipping, and *spare not me?* Indeed, your *O Lord, sir!* is very sequent to your whipping: you would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to 't.

Clo. I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my — *O Lord, sir!* I see things may serve long, but not serve ever.

Count. I play the noble housewife with the time, to entertain it so merrily with a fool.

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Clo. O Lord, sir! — Why, there 't serves well again.

Count. An end, sir, to your business. Give Helen this,
And urge her to a present answer back:
Commend me to my kinsmen and my son:
This is not much.

Clo. Not much commendation to them.

Count. Not much employment for you: you understand me?

Clo. Most fruitfully: I am there before my legs.

Count. Haste you again.

The aged and choleric King Lear, before all his court, had called upon his three daughters to make declaration of their love for him. Two of them, Goneril and Regan, were profuse in their professions of devotion, and to each he gave a third of his kingdom. But Cordelia, the remaining daughter, would profess nothing more than such love and duty as is due a father, reserving some portion of her love for him whom, haply, she would wed. This answer so angered the king that in his rage he cast her off, and disinherited her, dividing the remaining third of his kingdom between his other daughters, who ultimately

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repaid him with the basest ingratitude, contemptuous and cruel treatment. But the king of France, present on this occasion, was so pleased with the truth and sincerity of Cordelia that he took her, dowerless, for his bride.

The following scenes occur after Lear has foolishly divested himself of his kingdom and surrendered all authority and rule to the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall, husbands, respectively, of Goneril and Regan.

The first scene is in the Duke of Albany's palace, where the banished Earl of Kent, in disguise and still faithful to Lear, trips up the heels of an impudent messenger from the duchess to the king.

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service.

[*Giving KENT money.*]

Fool. Let me hire him too; here's my coxcomb.

[*Giving KENT his cap.*]

Lear. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour.

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Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an un-fee'd lawyer,—you gave me nothing for 't.—Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. Pr'ythee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

[To KENT.]

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet one?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That Lord that counsell'd thee

To give away thy land,

Come place him here by me,—

Do thou for him stand:

The sweet and bitter fool

Will presently appear;

The one in motley here,

The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on 't, and loads too: they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be

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snatching.—Nuncle, give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year; [*Singing.*
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

Pr'ythee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' the middle.

Lear, incensed by his daughter Goneril's ill treatment and ingratitude, denounces her and

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sets forth to make his home with Regan, from whom he is destined to receive even worse unkindness.

SCENE—*Court before the DUKE OF ALBANY'S Palace.*

Fool. . . . Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the middle on 's face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why to keep one's eyes of either side 's nose, that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong,—

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. So kind a father!— Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

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Lear. To take 't again perforce! — Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!

Keep me in temper: I would not be mad! —

A later scene, before the castle of the Earl of Gloucester.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.

Fathers that wear rags

Do make their children blind;

But fathers that bear bags

Shall see their children kind.

Kent. How chance the king comes with so small a number?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring in the winter. . . . Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill,

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let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives the better counsel, give me mine again: I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly:
The knave turns fool that runs away;
The fool no knave, perdy.

.

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! —
but, down!

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put them i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried, *Down, wantons, down!* 'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

Filled with rage at the base ingratitude of his two daughters, who wish him to dispense with all his followers, the crazed Lear curses them and goes forth at night to wander upon a desolate, storm-swept heath, attended only by the faithful Earl of Kent and "the bitter fool."

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Fool. He that has and a little tiny wit,— [*Singing.*
With heigh, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day.

Lear. True, boy.— Come, bring us to this
hovel. [*Exeunt LEAR and KENT.*

Fool. . . .

I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:—

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;

Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion:

Then comes the time, who lives to see 't,
That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live
before his time.

